Sure, why not?

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/49404529.

Rating:
Teen And Up Audiences

Archive Warning:
Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Categories:
F/M, Gen, Multi

Fandom:
Harry Potter - J. K. Rowling

Relationships:
Sirius Black/Harry Potter, James Potter/Lily Evans Potter

Characters:
Albus Dumbledore, James Potter, Remus Lupin, Sirius Black, Harry Potter, Peter Pettigrew, Lily Evans Potter, Alice Longbottom, Severus Snape, Bellatrix Black Lestrange, Tom Riddle | Voldemort, Regulus Black

Additional Tags:
Female Harry Potter, Marauders Era (Harry Potter), Marauders, Marauders Friendship (Harry Potter), Time Travel, Time Travel Fix-It, Alternate Universe, Good Albus Dumbledore, Slow Burn, Werewolf Reveal, Strong Female Characters, Mostly story is from other characters view

Language:
English

Collections:
MaeP

Stats:
Published: 2023-08-18 Completed: 2025-05-29 Words: 59,053 Chapters: 27/27

Sure, why not?

by 6coolaish6

Summary

On a normal full moon excursion, Marauders are faced with their worst nightmare. A war torn girl of their age is going to be ripped apart by ferocious Moony!
But why does she looked relieved to see Moony smashing towards her? Marauders life is certainly going to be interesting. Sirius is very intrigued by this enigma.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1

Padfoot bounced happily as Prongs playful wrestled with Moony. Wormtail was happily climbing trees. This time they had decided to venture a bit more deep into the forbidden forest. It wasn't that anyone would take a stroll at this time of the night here or any animal would dare to attack them when they had a ravaging Werewolf in their pack.

They were lucky that last full moon happened right as school was ending. At least Moony was not going to suffer alone. It also gave them a chance to really explore the mysteries and secret of Hogwarts. They were going to discover Hogwarts better than anyone has ever done before them. Sirius wondered if it was time to go back to their abode as the darkness was slowly shying away.

Sirius got busy admiring a unique flower, when he felt Prongs grunt loudly. Sirius saw the tail of Moony running inside the forest at full speed. Padfoot followed him, excited what Moony might have found out. Moony had the knack of finding hidden spots. There was no chance Moony would have caught any human scent since they were so deep in forest, even Hagrid ventured here only during day. Moony howled in the night as if challenging someone to a battle. That was odd. Last time he challenged a buffalo and was in deep state of sadness at harming an innocent being,

Padfoot felt a dread bubble up as he was able to see what had Moony so excited up. There was a girl, his age, in torn clothes with long straighthair blowing in the air. She looked like she has been through a winger and about to pass out. He admired her strength and courage when he realized that even though she was surrounded by spiders, she stood alert and fearless. He shuddered as hundreds of spiders slowly started to move towards her. He saw her relax her posture as she surveyed her surrounding. They have clearly barged into a standoff, when Moony came in like a wrecking ball.

Sirius must be scared out of his mind because he swear he saw the girl relax and looked hopefully towards a raging werewolf. Moony seems to be in a mood as he started to swat spiders left and right. The spiders quickly retreated and scattered around. Padfoot increased his speed and could feel Prongs do the same because now, Moony had turned his attention towards the girl in the middle.

The girl stood alert and wand was tightly in her hand. She was ready

for a fight but Sirius noticed, she wasn't pointing it towards Moony. He realized she wasn't going to curse him or attack him. She was just waiting to see what Moony would do. Patiently and was *nostalgia* that he saw pass through her expression. *Huh?*

Sirius saw Moony pause, stand still and curiously take in the girl. Moony sniffed her and howled. The girl cocked her head to a side and her lips twitched. Suddenly, Moony sat down on the floor, relaxed and carefree as you would, and kept staring at her. Sirius frowned, this was new. Good but new.

Prongs and Padfoot came in front of the girl. He felt her gasp a bit and move back. Padfoot cursed in his mind for the rotten luck. They literally were wrapping up to go back as dawn was about to break. Did the girl almost stumble? Really, a raging wolf she finds amusing but a dog and a stag is freaking her. *Who is she?*

Padfoot glanced at Prongs, who turned to glance at the girl. Prongs made calming noise and bumped him. Right, his antlers made it difficult to soothe a terrified girl. He turned back and a whine almost left his mouth. The girl was covered in blood. Was it hers? She did have cuts all over her. He saw that she was a victim of dark magic for sure. Her forehead had a mark that could only be left by dark magic. She had striking emerald eyes. She was wobbling a bit, maybe adrenaline was leaving her now or she was finally gasping the situation.

Sirius guesses handling one werewolf vs an army of spider must have been a safer bet for her. Surprisingly, her entire attention was on him, not the werewolf checking her out. Did her eyes fill with tears? She looked at him as if she couldnt believe her luck. He heard the familiar sound of Moony transforming back. Now with danger about to end, he started to wonder what to do with the girl. She would know Remus's identity. They needed to take her away before that happened. He looked at Prongs and hinted to the dilemma. Prrongs nodded and stood in front of the girl as precautionary measure. Peter kept an eye on her as Prongs did on Moony.

He went into the forest, transformed and came strolling around. For the first time, he noticed that the girl was in a simple pant and shirt which looked old, worn and torn. Her eyes were alert but she seems to be swaying.

"Hi", Sirius said softly.

The girl jumped in air and she had wand on his face faster than he could blink. He was impressed, she was no pushover. Her eyes were wide and she ran her eyes over him. There was something different in how she was pursuing him than anyone has ever done. It was also as if she was cataloging everything about him. She glowed slightly.

"What are you doing here?", Sirius asked softly.

He was not sure what would set her off. From experience he knew that after an ordeal, anything could set you off into a pile of crying mess. He was so not looking forward to that. He saw her ignore him as she watched in concern(?) at unconscious Remus. He heard her wince as she heard his bones shrink and rearrange to their normal size.

"Hi! Are you okay? Were you hurt?", James came to stand near him.

The girl looked as if she was just registering them. She looked as if she has seen ghosts. Whatever blood was there on her face, quickly faded. Her eyes grew large as she gaped at James. Sirius found that as a very odd reaction to 2 sixteen year old boys, granted handsome and very intelligent. Sirius figured it was shock at seeing James wander in suddenly. She gulped down as if fighting some very strong emotion as her eyes were rivetted on James.

"Did he hurt you?", Peter asked in concern.

He was surprised to see her actually position her body as if to defend Moony from them. James's eyebrows rose as he looked at her in intrigue. Her face suddenly went blank, wiped off all emotions. Sirius was very intrigued by this girl.

"No. He saved me from being spider food.", the girl rasped as she looked at Remus in concern.

Peter moved towards Moony and the girl raised her wand at him. They all looked warily at her. Clearly she has been through it today. They didnt want to hurt her more than she already has been.

"He didn't hurt me. He is in a vulnerable state and you don't need to disturb him.", she said with steel in her voice.

"We are his best friends and we know about his condition. We are last people to hurt him.", James said placidly but Sirius could see the girl had earned his respect.

"We usually come to pick him up after the episodes.", Peter added to

pacify the girl.

She looked at Peter with a peculiar expression but lowered her wand as she wobbled again.

"I am Sirius and this prat is James and the sweet fella is Peter." , Sirius introduced himself because he was dying to know who this enigma was.

"Harriet.", she said quietly as a shiver went through her.

Sirius looked down and winced as he saw that her ankle was swollen and turning rapidly black. He performed a healing spell. She smiled gratefully at him. Sirius felt warm and he hoped he looked decent enough for this gorgeous girl. Padfoot wanted to protect her. Odd.

"What are you doing here, Harriet?", James asked her curiously as he took out a bar of chocolate and gave it to her.

She did look weak and drained. She took the chocolate with another grateful small smile.

"Please call me Harry. I ...I was running away from death eaters. I...what date is it?", Harry asked tentatively

"24 June 1974", Peter squeaked.

Sirius was amused at Peter's nervousness. He was always such a disaster in front of any girl. Blood drained from her face as she ran her trembling hand over face as if trying to wrap her mind at the news. Sirius got worried. How long was she under duress?

"Would you like to meet our headmaster. I am sure Dumbledore will be able to help you. Come on, I can take you to him.", James offered her politely.

It was clear she needed adult help and someone they could trust. Dumbledore will obviously know how to help her out.

"Thank you!", Harry said in relief as James started to lead her out of the forest.

She paused and looked back at Moony, who was still out. The pain of transformation always knocked him out for an hour or so.

"Is he gonna be alright?" , Harry asked in worry.

All three were shocked to see her concern for Moony. She was something. To be compassionate for werewolf was unheard of in this world.

"Don't worry about it, we will take of him.", Sirius said solemnly as he appraised this slip of a girl again.

She had more courage and compassion than whole Slytherin house together. Gits all of them. She looked him in the eye. Sirius found himself rooted to the spot as the emerald green eyes stared into his soul. She smiled softly and Sirius could feel same on his face as well. She nodded and let James take her away.

An enigma indeed.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Harry was tired of destiny's games. Because honestly, what in the name Merlin's sagging balls?!?

Harry had,somehow, managed to defeat Lord Voldemort. Lost people closest to her. Tried to build a society where everyone can have a decent enough life. Worked on her Auror career and supported her best friends through their career and marriage. She did feel she should have started charging both those idiots for listening to them fight like cat and dog. Hermione's pregnancy felt like being chased by dragon without broom or wand. Ron had famously started to go white in the terror as they went through this twice. Harry wore the favorite Aunt's crown with pride, much to annoyance of Ginny, Harry's fiancé and Ron's only sister.

Life was good till few Death Eaters entered Ministry and started to attack indiscriminately. The fight went on for hours and hours. Harry chased last couple of Death Eaters into the Murder chamber. She skillfully ignored the warning bell going in her head that it was a trap.

She was tired and so done with these bloody Death Eaters. What are they still going on about? Their Lord is so dead that even Thestrals couldn't see him. Like all parts of his soul were dead. She had taken great pains to ensure that. But *nooooo*....the dumber-than-trolls Death Eater couldn't comprehend that. Couldn't beat Lockhart, these idiots!

Harry was in middle of an intense duel with a random death eater, when a spell hit her from behind. She stumbled against a shelf and blacked out. *Fucking cowards*! But that Death Eater was surely gonna get their name in gold for killing the Chosen One. She prayed for the wizarding world because Hermione and Ron were gonna go absolutely bonkers.

She was back at the after life Kings cross station. She sighed as she waited for Dumbledore to appear and take her whenever she needed to go. Nothing happened and Harry grew impatient.

Is this after death? Surely not! She expected adventure. Isn't that what Dumbledore said 'To a well organized mind, death is but the next

great adventure'. Albeit, she didn't have an organized mind, quite scattered honestly, but this cant be an adventure. She had more adventure in first year than here. Hell, even her zoo trip had more spice then this peace.

Suddenly Deathly Hallows symbol popped up and floated around her head. Like an annoying fly, as big as a fist. It buzzed as if impatient for delay *Harry* was causing. The audacity of the Deathly Hallows! She was technically its Lord. Didn't feel very Lordly at the moment. It didn't do anything just buzzed in front of Harry angrily as if yelling at her for not grabbing it the moment it graced her with its presence.

Harry wanted to be petty and let it buzz to see what it does. Except the buzzing was getting on her nerves. Harry shrugged and went to grab it. She figured it won't be as boring as sitting at an empty station for eternity. She also had feeling Deathly Hallows could be far more petty than her.

She was spit out right in middle of a fight. Not like a teenager brawl because when has her life been that easy. No it was full 'I would dance on your grave, Naked!, just you wait.' fight.

Harry started to defend herself from people intent on killing her. So you know, same old. Her spells and way of fighting seemed to shock them. She has always been the best at defense against dark arts plus Auror training helped her become an expert Duelist.

While she was fighting for what seemed to be her this life, her mind was being made aware of someone's else memory merging with hers. It was like fighting without her glasses on as her brain went through a splitting headache while Moaning Myrtle sang right next to her ear. How she survived, she would never be able to tell.

She managed to reach some place that felt a bit safer. She let the memories take their residence as she calmed her nerves. It was just a new hoop thrown at her, she can deal with whatever it is. She saw her life as Harriet Potter, cousin of James Potter.

Oh?

She didn't know she had an Aunt. She briefly remembered that a cousin of her grandparents and his family had been brutally murdered. This had enraged her grandparents to then openly and staunchly oppose Voldemort, putting a target on them and their coming generations.

So she had to fight or she would die as was previously written. Harry grumbled as she was discovered again by very, very motivated and angry people. She wondered if their appraisal was coming soon and got fighting again.

She was pleased when she realized her old wand had made into this world with her. Her spells were not as powerful as she was used to. She figured it must be because this body is not used to the strain some spell caused and also she was dead exhausted.

She had reached a forest.

How?

Don't know, don't care at this point.

She was just happy to be able to run. She wondered if she should just *Accio* a broom. It would be easier, right? She could hear someone following her but it was fading a bit too, like they were in opposite direction. She doubted she could fly in such thick forest. She could but it will defeat whole purpose of disappearing stealthily and fast if she kept bumping into tree branches. She had tried apparition but wasn't able to. So she ran till she could.

She gulped air down her lungs as she collapsed next to a huge tree. The stamina of this body was at par with Neville in first year. She grimaced as she felt her stomach cramp. She hasn't been this out of shape in a very long time. She could feel the effect of several curses this poor girl has suffered start to take its toll. Why was she targeted and treated so badly?

She made sense of her new memories. She was only daughter to an eccentric father. Her mother had died when she was born. Her father was a Ruin Explorer and had left her often with his wife's squib sister, who was sweet unlike Petunia. Since he thought school education was too streamlined and not good enough, she was homeschooled. They had kept their distance from wizarding world as much as possible as it was Harriet mother's dying wish to keep her away from war. So much for that.

Her father was hunted in last days of his life. They both were on run as Death Eaters tried to capture them. Her father was digging into Gaunt family's past, which ,of course, freaked Voldemort out.

Harry wondered if it meant he changed the horcrux location. Her father died trying to protect her from Voldemort himself. She

wondered if this meant she had protection against Voldemort here as well.

Voldemort captured her as was his destiny. Its like if she exists, he would find and stalk her as the only goal of his life. He just needed a bloody partner or something. This level of obsession was crazy.

Voldemort hadn't tortured her curiously during the captivity. Voldemort left her with his death eater to practice their dark spells, after realizing she had no idea what her father did. He was going to feed her to Nagini in the end, hardly mattered what happened to her before that. He would visit her often and just talk to her when she was convulsing in pain or just getting a breather. Maybe what he really needed was a therapist.

Harry felt sad for what all that poor girl went through while she was in captive. Those arseholes fed her enough healing potions to live next day. Although that girl had suffered through a lot, she still had willingness to break out and save her life. Harry felt respect built for Harriet Potter. What an amazing girl!

This body was still Harry's with all her scars. She guessed she could create a story to explain all of them. She wasn't sure how she was going to explain the dragon burn or her killing curse scars. She would cross that bridge when it came.

She had bigger problems. One, she had no idea where she was. Two, what time she was in. She figured it would be 1970s based on Voldemort's face alone. But what exact date? Three, she still has to figure out if the timelines were same as hers. And fourth, her hair was standing in alert.

She opened her eyes and groaned. Because COME ON! She was surrounded by spiders. Hundreds of them. She might have been able to get out of this situation before but she was exhausted, magically drained and just so done with both her lives. Where was Hagrid when you needed him.

She screamed in annoyance as she got up. She wondered if Mr. Weasley's car would come charging in to save the day again. She missed that car. She had found out later it ran over Death Eaters during final battle. How brilliant was that?

The bloody Deathly Hallows can fucking die. It was as if Deathly Hallow did not like that she died so painlessly and peacefully. It has decided to rectify her simple death into gore fest. She was right,

Deathly Hallows is petty. She breathed out and let her Auror training wash through her. She can get out. It would be draining and probably burn the whole damn forest but she would show Deathly Hallow who the Master was. Or in end, she could always beg for forgiveness from the Deathly Hallows.

Before she could decide what to do. A howl went through the clearing. She was transported back to her third year.

MOONY!

Granted it could have been another werewolf. She is not sure if all werewolves looked same or had distinct differences but she was gonna hope it is Moony.

Moony started to literally swat spiders left and right. She felt hope and laughter bubble in her. Hopefully dad and Sirius were close by. Moony regarded her with such curiosity that she felt amused, even as he howled. Almost as if he was pleased to see her. She felt smile tug her lips.

Padfoot and Prongs came charging through the field and stood as wall in front of her. She almost stumbled as she realized that her father and Sirius both were alive. She could have wept with joy. Moony was still regarding her curiously as he sniffed her and patiently waited for something.

She smiled softly at him seeing his playful side. This was a lot better than her past. She wondered if having Animagus friends grounded him in more ways then one. She felt gratitude in her for his trust. An unknown person to him but he was technically a dark creature, atleast on full moons, did he recognize something his human self wouldn't be able to?

She felt like crying when Prongs tried to comfort her only to realize he was making her cry. He thought it was due to his animal form but she has never had the privilege of seeing her father's Animagus form in real life. He was majestic and strong. His eyes were hazel still and carried such concern and love that it almost broke her. She has to pull herself together as difficult as it may be. Deathly Hallows has definitely taken offense as she almost bawled in tears as she saw a cautious but still cheerful Padfoot.

Padfoot padded closer to her curiously and she couldn't breathe. Here was the man who suffered so cruelly his whole life and died to save her. She has never forgiven herself for his death. For leaving him

alone when she could have kept him sane in that hellhole. For serving him on a silver platter to the other side and death. He could have lived. *He should have lived*!

She was so lost in her guilt and memoires that she didn't notice that Sirius had gone in forest to transform till a soft 'hi' reached her. Before she could understand, her wand was up.

She gasped when she took him in. He looked remarkably like the Sirius in Snape's memory. The lazy grace with handsome, aristocratic looks and sparkling, mischievous eyes had her rivetted. She drank in this version of him, so different to the one she last remembered. There was a spring in his steps, confidence aura around him and mischievous silver eyes that drew you to him. She knew she must look deranged but this was her *godfather*! Her guardian and her protector!

She realized he was asking her something but she couldn't understand a word he was saying. Her dad was suddenly in front of her with caring and kind hazel eyes. He was tall, thin and alive. She figured she was going in shock.

How is she supposed to act normal in this circumstance? She so wanted to go and hug her father but her limbs seems frozen as she gawked at them. She was so similar to him. She could have been his twin if she was a man.

Peter arrival was like a Moaning Myrtle had walked through her. She saw Peter walking towards Remus and instinctively stood in between them. She would be damned if she let this rodent destroy lives. She stressed that there was no need to move Remus, the poor guy has suffered enough. Her father reassurance made her feel a bit better but Peter comment on made her want to punch him.

She lowered her wand as she realized that she can't do that to him... yet. When Sirius introduced them and called Peter a sweet guy, disgust literally rolled down her spine. She felt cold sweat break when she figured it was the her father's fifth year as she calculated the time.

Sirius and James small acts of care for her warmed her heart and nearly made her wail. She needed to think and Dumbledore, anyways, seemed like the natural next step. She was a bit concerned about Moony. The bone breaking looked awfully painful. Peter checked Moony's pulse and she had to fight urge to blast him off. Sirius's promise was the only that made her leave them with that rodent.

She walked with James in silence. She could feel his intriguing eyes

but he maintained a respectful silence. She knew them enough to know they would try to find out on their own so best would be to give them something to work on.

"What were you doing so deep in the forest?", Harry rasped. She really needed to drink.

James looked at her curiously, took a bottle of water from thin air and handed it to her. She drank as if she had been stuck in the Chamber of Secrets for days.

"We come to help our friend after transformation. It is a painful process. He has never ventured this deep in the forest. It took us a while to find him.", James said with straight face. He was a good liar. Harry chuckled inwardly

"How were able to find him?", Harry asked playing along.

"We have our spells. How did you reach here?", James asked her, changing subject quickly

"I...my father and I were attacked by death eaters. He ...he sacrificed himself to protect me.", She trembled a bit remembering the gruesome way Voldemort killed Harriet's father.

She breathed in deep and continued in chocking voice," Death eaters captured me to...well....practice. Have fun. Torture...depended on their mood really. I was going to be Voldemort's pet's food, so they didn't really care what it was as long as I was breathing. I was lucky to have caught a break and strength to call my wand and slip out. It wasn't long till they found out and started to hunt. I have been running and hiding for days, if not months.... I didn't even know what date it was till you guys mentioned it.",

She saw James's face turn more contrite and concerned as she told her story. He made a move as if to comfort her but restrained himself. He produced another chocolate for her. She smiled ruefully as she ate that too.

As if deciding to change the gloomy mood, James said enthusiastically, "This is Hogwarts, the best magical school in world. You were in forbidden forests of the school. Dumbledore is the greatest wizard of our time and he will surely know how to help you. The walk is bit long for Dumbledore's office. Are you sure you have enough strength to walk? I can transform something into something to carry you. I could fly you to the Hospital Wing. Think what a glorious

entry it would make. "

Harry s at snorted as James ended his offer in a tone of dream and wonder. He was sweet, caring and respectful. Of course, mischievousness, adventurous and loyal was all part of Potter DNA, she would know.

"Thanks to your chocolates, my energy has restored a bit. I can walk, thank you for the offer though as fun as it sounds. I have a strong feeling Dumbledore would be shocked to see my present appearance . Let alone riding on a flying carpet. I suppose I am to refrain from mentioning that I found you three in the forbidden forest?", Harry asked with a raised eyebrow.

James chuckled and said," Your loss, flying carpet entry sounds very cool. Maybe Sirius and I could do it next year. Don't worry about Dumbledore, he already knows we do this. That man knows everything. It downright freaky sometimes. Don't worry about getting us in trouble. Its last week of the year, Professors are not in mood to give detentions or anything. They are already so tired of us. So which school did you to before .."

James flustered as he tried to word it in a way that would offend/ trigger her.

"Before everything went up in flames?", Harry supplied with a small smile.

James grinned as he realized she wasn't taking offence.

"My father didn't believe in formal education. He thought it limited our vision and capabilities immensely. He homeschooled me. I was supposed to come to Hogwarts to give OWLs though but well...guess I finally made it.", Harry said as she looked at the tower which has been her safe harbor in more ways than one.

She was returning home and Voldemort had pull a Dumbledore level Miracle to even touch her loved ones this time. Riddle, get ready to face your swan song, you noseless bastard.

Chapter End Notes

what do you think? Too much on the nose?

Chapter 3

Broaching adventurous or dangerous situations topic with James Potter will probably result him talking till next World Cup. When you are BFFs with a nerdy werewolf and rebel Sacred Family Heir, it comes with the territory. Their collective high intelligence combined with his panache for exploration, adventure has never been far away.

James is aware that his killer looks, sharp wits, brilliant personality, pro quidditch skills and family wealth attracts a lot of attention. If only a certain fiery red head with brains to compete him and hella gorgeous body, would just notice this, he wont be wanting of anything. Lily believes, with proof, that he is a self centered arsehole. He is, he wont deny it. He is the one who gave her numerous proofs of same. He is either an arsehole or an angel. There no in between with him. This does tick off Remus a lot too but Moony can be bribed.

Speaking of Remus, he is going to be an absolute nightmare and a wreck when he wakes up. Remus, who goes into a bloody guilt spiral for playing with other animals, will have achieved anxiety as high as James's broom can fly at almost hurting a girl. Today's situation could have been absolutely horrendous and nightmarish. Hell, he is sure *he* would have nightmares on it. James agrees, to a degree, but this was a very rare, bad situation from which, thankfully, everyone came out safe.

Moony was almost playful with Harry, like he is with Prongs and Padfoot, and even guarded her. Moony never guarded Marauders (very rude). It would be a pain to get Moony to leave the Shack now. They shouldn't just stop the exploration of Hogwarts because of a rarity. They just needed a better way of ensuring no one ever comes this close to the situation again.

James was most intrigued by this fighter next to him, who was one of the most fearless and compassionate person he has ever encountered. His Animagus could literally smell dark magic that was attacking her body. She would need long recovery and tons of love to overcome whatever hell she had endured. He was worried for her.How much has she been through? She was his age! To suffer so much at such young age. Merlin! He cant even wrap his brain around it. Her reaction to the today's date had him very worried.

Harry's eyes had sparkled when she saw Hogwarts. It is a majestic sight and even after so many years, his awe for this place hasn't

reduced even a bit. Harry got lost in her thoughts and worry as they trekked towards Dumbledore's office. James couldn't let that happen. He felt responsible for this daring, kind soul. His need to explore had almost cost this girl her future and well being. He had this very strong urge to hide her from the cruel world. He would wager a bet that even his most nightmarish scenario wouldn't come close to her reality. That thought was chilling.

James desperately started a running commentary on school, halls, corridors, students, classes. Anything and everything to get that look off her face and from stopping his mind from imagining what all she had suffered through.

The lost look was soon replaced by amusement and twinkling eyes. She was looking at him softly and with a peculiar expression. He kept it aside to examined later.

"As we were running away from a very angry Professor McGonagall, Sirius, that git, had the brilliant idea to turn his handkerchief into an open box. It worked in a way. Minnie's Animagus, a cat, was unable to resist the urge to sit in the box. Sadly, the handkerchief had his name embroidered in it. We did get detention and whole lot of yelling but the sight was sure glorious."

James paused when Harry started to laugh. She looked so carefree, while still covered in blood. He didn't know why but he felt almost a familial bond with this girl or at least Prongs did. That is odd, to say least.

He said the password to Dumbledore's office (their last OWLs exam still fresh in his mind). Dumbledore's office always had a very comforting feel to it. Like you can bear all your troubles here as you sip on comforting tea. Plus it reminded him of his father's Potion invention room. Harry was taking everything with awe and interest.

Then Fawkes, Dumbledore 's Phoenix, flew from her stand and rested on Harry's shoulder, pecking her lovingly. Fawkes only has ever looked at the Marauders with disinterest and here, Fawkes was almost coddling an unknown person. Harry smiled gratefully at the bird. That's how Dumbledore found them. Harry stroking Fawkes lovingly and James gaping at her.

Who was this girl?

"Professor Dumbledore, this is Harry.", James started the introduction with enthusiasm.

Dumbledore was wearing a bright neon robe, which is likely his night robe, with a tall twinkling hat. Dumbledore analyzed the situation quickly and with warmth welcomed Harry to Hogwarts. James felt calm knowing that Dumbledore will never let harm befall a child. He would obviously know what to do. He was Dumbledore, after all. Dumbledore offered Harry a lemon sherbet. Harry seemed tickled by it. She definitely found Dumbledore's eccentricities entertaining.

"Harry, nice to meet you. Why don't you take a seat?", Dumbledore offered her gently as called Twinkle, a house elf, to get her some snacks.

"Now, Mr. Potter. Were you on your nightly stroll? Exploring or possibly planning the last of your pranks?", Dumbledore asked James indulgently.

James grinned and said," We still have few days left, Professor. We wouldn't want to let you down by just having one prank planned."

"How premature of me to assume, dear. Although I do think Minerva would have aged by 15 years by the time you lot graduate", Dumbledore joked

"Sweet, she will get to use her nine lives. She likes our pranks, she is just incapable of showing it.", James said with confidence

Dumbledore chuckled and waited for James to speak.

James elaborated," She seems to be in need of help. As painful as it is for me to say, she needs adult help, which I clearly am not yet."

"Ah, I see. It was a nightly stroll then.", Dumbledore said as he looked at the almost gone moon.

James understood what Dumbledore was asking. Moony was not supposed to leave the Shacks *ever*. He was a buffoon! It just occurred to him why Harry had asked if she needed to lie to Dumbledore. He was only thinking of them, not Moony. Shit!

"Did she happen to run at our mutual friend?", Dumbledore prompted James again while gazing at sunrise.

"I did barge into their crazy night stroll. The mutual friend was kind and friendly enough.", Harry spoke with steel in her voice

Dumbledore stared deeply at Harry, trying to identify if it was true or

not. James was surprised and awed at her protecting Moony so blatantly. She hardly knew them.

"And how did you come across him?", Dumbledore asked her sternly

"She had, somehow, apparated to Shrieking Shacks. She looked lost in the old dingy corridor. I brought her here using the tunnel under the tree. She was surprised to see how violent that tree gets in the mornings.", James knew he was lying through his teeth.

He needed to provide a plausible story and give Harry enough crumbs to build a story. Dumbledore knew they are aware of Shack's purpose and it can be apparated in. So not that off the possibility. He did wonder if it would cause trouble for Harry later on. They were in a pickle, for sure.

"You just happened to be in Shrieking Shack?", Dumbledore asked them suspiciously

"I was fighting few people determined to torture and, eventually, murder me. I.. I was running out of energy and ability to keep fighting. As an desperate attempt, I wanted to reach somewhere safe. When I opened my eyes I was out of that danger but in the some sort of old building's corridor. These guys found me before I was in any sort of danger. They are lucky I didn't fire any curses at them. I caught the tail end of our mutual friend's transformation.", Harry lied smoothly.

James was impressed at her coming out with such lies on spot. Keeping enough truth to pass the lie from being discovered. He would have to show her the Shack though to make it plausible if it ever gets questioned.

"I do have to ask you to not speak about it to anyone, apart from these four that is.", Dumbledore told her seriously.

James doesn't think he has seen Dumbledore this serious ever.

"Why, of course. He.. they have nothing to worry.", Harry said with a reassuring smile at James.

James grinned back at her warmly.

"Well, in that case, good to know.", Dumbledore said as Twinkle appeared back with food.

Dumbledore smiled and pointed James to leave. James gave Harry an encouraging smile and left the office.

James trekked back to Shack. He mind a whirl of thoughts and emotions. Tonight was like being chased by Moony on a broom with bludger coming in hot from other direction. Harry's situation did trouble James. She mentioned that her father was murdered. He doesn't think her mother is in the picture. She still has 2 years to go before she can get a job to make a living. He wondered if he could ask Dad to maybe help her out in some way. They could even take her in, if he pushes them enough. The house is humongous and he was sure Mom would be thrilled to spoil a girl.

The Shack was empty. He started towards Hospital Wing. Twinkle popped next to him to tell him his father was waiting for him in Dumbledore's office. Fear gripped his heart. These day's if your parents are in Dumbledore's Office, it can only mean murder of someone close to you. It has been occurring way too frequently. In Hogwarts' bubble, they don't really feel how terrible the world is getting. Harry is example enough. He reached the office in record time to see his extremely troubled father.

"Dad? Who died? Is mom okay? Are you okay? Who.."

"Calm down, Jamie. I was not called here because of *that*."

James breathed in deeply and defensively said, "I didn't do anything ... that excessive that you would be called. I have done way worse and you were never called before!"

Dad chuckled and hugged him.

"I know, love. I am here because of another issue. I believe you had the fortune of meeting a interesting girl today.", Dad said cryptically

"Harry? Yeah, I did. She was in bad shape, Dad. Death Eaters were after her and we happened to meet her. Is she okay? Wait.. why are you here? Does she need one of your patent potions? Is it that bad?", James asked in dread.

Was Harry even more hurt than what he could see and feel? He knew he should have conjured the flying carpet. She shouldn't have expelled her energy in walking. Why didn't he just do that? He could have told her this is the way everyone moves here. She was new, she wouldn't have known.

"Jamie, sit down. We need to talk.", Dad said gravely.

Dad started once James sat down," She is daughter of Alexander Potter."

"Your Brother! The Ruin master? Didn't he take very dangerous jobs? Wait...Are you serious? Harry is a *Potter*? I HAVE A SISTER? Oh that's better than winning seven Quidditch Cups in a row!", James said in glee as he whooped

"Cousin, yes, Jamie."

"Semantics. So she will live with us then?"

"Yes, we are going to ask her that. But..."

"This is absolutely fantastic! When can she move in? Oh, please give her the room opposite mine! It would be so cool! I have heard brothers annoy their sisters. I can definitely do that better if she in right next door. Plus, we can sneak out and eat ice creams or wander around. Oh... oh.. I hope she plays quidditch. It would be a riot!", James said in happiness as he kept jumping in excitement in between.

James couldn't believe his luck. Here he was forming plans of trying to get Harry in his house, when she was his sister all along! Wait why didn't she tell him that? She must have known they were related!

"Why didn't she say anything? She knows about us, right?", James asked his dad

"Jamie, sit down please. You need to understand her situation and possible danger in future too."

James sat in horror as he digested what his dad had just told. Harry had lost her mom in child birth and spent most of time with his mother's squib sister's family. Her father's job kept him away a lot. Her father had stumbled on some ruin which got attention of Voldemort. Voldemort and his lackeys had brutally murdered Harry's Aunt andher family. Harry and her father had been on run for days, when Voldemort murdered her dad and took Harry hostage. This was beginning of his school year. Harry had been tortured, physically harmed and been an testing dummy for Death Eater's Dark Spells since then. Almost 9 months! Even St.Mungos was baffled at her health chart. She was going to stay in St.Mungos for some time.

"Merlin! How is she still.. Dad you should have seen her! She was

badarse, chill and calm. Those egoist arseholes! I hate them! I hate these bigots and Death Eaters!", James said angerly

His dad said stoically as his eyes glittered," Just so you know, Dumbledore had warned me that bringing Harry into our custody will bump us to top list of Death Eater's people to murder".

"Oh, I would love to see them try. Wretched animals! Please tell me this hasn't dissuaded you from taking her in?"

"Of course not, Jamie. I had just sent letter to Ministry to get the process started. By end of day, we would be her guardian. "

"That's bloody brilliant, dad! I think we should remodel that room and .."

"Yes, we will do all that. First things first, I got this bracelet, our grandmother used to wear, for her. What do you think?"

"Ah, its pretty and not too flashy. That's great! I want to gift her something too!"

"Why, of course.", Dad smiled and asked him to follow.

"Hello.", Harry greeted them awkwardly

"Hello, dear. I am Fleamont Potter, your father's second cousin, and this is my son, James. I believe you two already had a chance to catch up.", Dad introduced them

"Your son is a very sweet guy, Uncle. I should have recognized from his mop of hair. (*Hey!)* It is nice to finally meet you too. I have heard a lot from my father about you and how you both used to prank your grandmother."

"Ah, the golden days. Has he told you about time when we charmed our mother to make quack sound every time she moved? Or when.."

"Dad."

"Right, right. We will have lot of time for *those* stories. Its been a long time coming to meet you. Its been a rough journey for you, my darling, Are you feeling a bit better now?", Fleamont asked her

"Currently, waiting to see if my stomach will explode with all the potions I have been forced fed.", Harry gave a side look to her side

table

"Well, I am sure there a potion for that too, dear.", Dad chuckled as Harry groaned.

"Harry, your father meant so much to me. He was so determined to explore the most dangerous ruins the world had to offer. His determination, grit and courage always inspired me. Honestly, I have invented several of my patented potions to cure whatever curses he caught in his explorations. When he met your mother, he seemed to have found the anchor. After her, you were all he had left."

"Your mother was not very fond of the war and discrimination that was increasing daily. Especially how our society treated her sister for being a squib. She is.. was a perfectly wonderful woman. Your father had taken your mother's *that* wish at heart. I had not heard from him for years. He did visit once in the beginning, so that you two could meet. But alas, that was last time I saw my brother.", Dad sniffled

"When his letter came, Harry, I will not hide the terror that gripped me. I almost lost my mind when I didn't find you guys in the agreed spot. There was no news of you or him. I tired through so many contacts and channels to find any information about either of you. But nothing. It was as if the earth had swallowed you. There are just so many people missing or gone into hiding, that Ministry is just overwhelmed to keep looking for people hard to find."

"When Dumbledore told me how my brother died, I didn't think I would feel the pain that I felt. But then he told me what you, my precious flower, have gone through... I felt like someone was tearing my heart one muscle after another."

"I am so sorry, honey, for not being able to find you, protect you and that you had to suffer so much at such a tender age. I am so sorry, honey, we weren't able to find you before or help you before. The torture and injustice you went through could have been avoided. I dearly miss my brother and I wish..", Fleamont seemed lost in his thoughts and sorrow.

He shook his head and said with teary smile," I cant change the past but I can definitely try to make your present and future a bit better. I have started the process of officially taking your custodianship. I expect it to be done by tonight. If not, Minister is going get an bashing. They do not want to annoy me right now. "

"I wanted to invite you to stay with us till you finish your schooling

and beyond (if we are so lucky). I am aware that my brother wished for you to be homeschooled. If that's your wish as well, we can certainly arrange for it but if you would like to give Hogwarts a shot, let us know. We would arrange for that as well."

"I would like to study in Hogwarts, if that alright.", Harry said politely.

"Well, of course dear! My son, James, is same age as yours. So he should be able to help you and guide you. Now, I have spoken with Dumbledore, you would have to stay at St. Mungos for few days. Ministry will sending an Auror to keep an eye on you in the Hospital Wing, given the threat you are facing. Afterwards, of course, you would come to our place for summers..."

Harry cut him off," Uncle not to be rude, but I don't want to be burden. I already have a target on my back and several death eaters, if not Voldemort himself, will want me dead. I don't want to make your family come in his radar too. I can stay in Hogsmade or some muggle establishment, where I am sure Death eaters wont find me till school starts. I will take muggle jobs to sustain ..."

"Nonsense! Honey, I am touched by your concern but we are already a target for Death eaters and Voldemort. I am afraid our defiance of him might have made the death eaters more keen to attack your dad and you. As for safety, our manor is one of the oldest and most guarded places. It has protections to not allow anyone who wishes to harm us into the property.I will not have you living off street. You are my niece and I will be damned for you to live without a family. James, here, has already dreaming of what all you two can do. My wife is already preparing your room. Oh, this reminds me. A gift from my wife. She didn't want to overwhelm you. When she and Jamie are together, their energy usually quadruples."

"I...thank you Uncle. I..." , Harry tried to say, overwhelmed.

"Its right of elders to spoil young ones, my moonflower.", Dad said lovingly

"I don't want to intrude or create issue for James. It would be a big change plus the danger and..", Harry asked him uncertainly.

"Harry, you are joking right? You have no idea how much I have been holding on to my self control, I have very little to begin with, to not interrupt in middle and just hug the life out you! You are MY SISTER! This is absolutely fantastic! We will play cards, fly our brooms and

plan pranks and ....oh! You wait! Come home, then you will see how much I mind.", James said happily as he shoved his hastily made gift into Harry's hand.

She stared at the gift and James's billion dollar smile.

"I didn't have much time but I wanted to gift you something. Now open the gift!", James said excitedly

She opened gift to find a name tag "Harry Potter, Sister Extraordinare of James Potter."

James saw a tear drop from Harry's eyes.

"Are you sure, James?", Harry asked emotionally

"That I want to have a sister as amazing as you? You bet your arse I do.", James said with 100% confidence.

Harry smiled and wore both the name tag and bracelet.

"Welcome to the family, Harry. Hope you can survive our crazy household!", Lord Potter said with a mischievous smile.

Chapter 4

"This is Gryffindor tower, Harry.", James introduced her to the cozy common room with a broad smile.

The common room had couple of people lazing around, even they glared at them and got up to leave. Everyone else seems to be taking advantage of the beautiful day.

James and his dad were discussing on what needs to be done next after Harry, *finally,* agreed to live with them. He HAS A SISTER! He still cant believe it! Fine, Cousin, whatever. But as he told Harry, he wasnt big on semantics. She was his sister and that was the end of conversation .

Dumbledore and House heads had then glided in with the Sorting Hat to get Harry sorted. Minnie felt it would make it easier for Harry to assimilate later. Sorting Hat had proudly declared her a Gryffindor, much to delight of Potters. Dad gifted her his Gryffindor scarf.

As dad and he were finalizing with McGonagall on Harry's tests and what all she needed to prep for, James sensed mischief in the air. Harry was holding a small bead bag in her hand and smiling innocently at him. He knew that smile. He has perfected that smiled. Harry has pulled a prank. James tried to subtly detect what it could be. He swears he saw something sparkly vanish from Harry's hand. Minnie was fighting a smile as she eyed him. James was intrigued.

He walked up to the mirror to admire his enhanced features. He was impressed. Harry has changed his clothes and hair to bring out his real self, a Gryffindor Lion with human legs and arms. His glorious long mane was flowing in the wind making him feel extra special. He rocked the look, if he would say so himself. She has also honored him with a crown that spelled 'Semantics'. He twirled around a bit to get a better look and see his mane flow. James didn't undo the spell but wore it with pride. This was his sister's first gift to him and it was fantastic.

James had insisted on giving her a tour of Hogwarts before dad took her home. She still needed some time to recover from her horrible ordeal. He was thrilled that he would have a sister now. He was going to spoil her rotten and kill anyone that came to harm her or flirt with her. She brought a protective side out of him which was only reserved for Sirius till now.

Harry had turned his appearance back to his usual, despite protests from him, as they went to meet the Marauders. He did keep the "Semantics" crown on.

"Its cozy"

Harry's awed voice brought him back to present. A small smile gracing her face with a look of longing and nausea. He wondered if she has forgotten how to laugh...a laugh that aches your body. He won't be shocked if after everything, she was cautious and bogged down. He would make it his goal to make her laugh out loud as many times as he possibly could. She was his sister after all.

"This is where you would be mostly spending time for next 2 years. We do a lot more than sit here like lazy bums but this is a common fixture. This side is boys dorms (girls can come up there) and that side is girls dorm (boys *cant* come up there. Found out painfully, story for another time). So any rendev...", James was interrupted by jovial aristocratic voice that he knew so well

"There you are, you wanker. You had us worried. Since we are all free, maybe we could go and meet Harry? She must be lonely there with only Madam Promfrey and her potions to keep her company. I know Moony loves her and tries to find any reason to spend time with her, but maybe Harry would need proper entertainment. Also if Moony moons one more time, I would apparate him to Moon. He literally ran out of Hospital Wing the moment he gained any sense. He hasn't stopped mooning like a hippogriff in labor since then. What do you..", Sirius eyes went wide as he noticed Harry standing next to him.

Harry was staring at him in amusement. She chuckled at Sirius flabbergasted expression. That brought Sirius out of his stupor.

"My brave lady, how are you this fine morning? I knew you couldn't have resisted my charm. I have to say you look absolutely delectable.", Sirius said with a bow as he kissed back of her hand.

Harry turned pink and spluttered. "uh..I .."

James decided he needed to save his sister from the hurricane that is Sirius Black.

"Padfoot, meet my sister, Harriet Potter.", James said with a blinding smile as he draped his arm around her shoulder.

Remus, Peter and Sirius all gaped at the information and just stared

wide eyed between two. He stood proud and tall as he almost preened. He knew he did that sometimes but it seem to be tickling Harry's bones, so why not.

"Cousin, James.", Harry corrected lightly.

"Semantics. Not big on it.", James dismissed her playfully as she snorted.

"Here let me formally introduce you to my best friends. Peter Pettigrew, a sneak master, who can always smuggle in sweets when you need it. Good at detecting incoming Slytherins. They are arseholes, you will get hang of it. "

Peter gave her an awkward wave as he stumbled on his feet. James rolled his eyes at Peter's clumsiness and awkwardness in front of girls. They had genuinely believed he would grow out of it. Instead, he seems to be growing into it. Harry had peculiar look. James chalked it off to Harry trying not to laugh at awkwardness that was Peter.

"Remus Lupin, studious and steady guy. If you need help with anything academics, he is the one to reach out to."

Remus smiled shyly at first as he looked at Harry in worry. Harry gave him a broad smile, which relaxed him and he nodded to her.

"He won't let you copy his answer but will *happily* give you 5 hours lecture on same topic with diagrams and showmanship worthy of competing Dumbledore. You can always bribe him with chocolates though (so keep one handy always). If you lose him, best bet would be library. He denies it but we know its because of his humongous crush on Madam Pince, our senile Librarian. Uff.."

Remus had tackled James into a headlock. James, unperturbed, gave a muffled introduction for last person standing.

"This dog, you have already had the misfortune of meeting, is Sirius Black. You wont be able realize it by looking at him but he comes from a well bred and sophisticated family. Also he is bike nut. So if you want to distract him or just shut him for a while, give anything bike related and he will stay busy for hours. He is a good boy and likes his tummy rubbed."

Sirius gave him a bombastic side eye at the end, even as he smiled brightly at Harry. Then, this drama queen, bowed down again and produced a rose bouquet for Harry. Harry cocked her head to side as

she took his antics in humor.

Remus seems to not be able to hold on to his guilt vomit out a minute longer, as he dived headlong into a heartfelt apology.

"Umm.. Harry, I really want to apologize for last night. I am sure you must have been terrified out of your mind being faced with a monster. Please forgive me if.."

Harry cut him off gently," Remus, listen, the only thing you did last night was save me from being spider food. You were terrific in scaring the life out of spiders and saving my tiny hinny. Mr-Awesome-Furry-Guy."

Marauders were looking at her as if Snape had started to do Rumba dance. She rolled her eyes.

"You are not mad at me? Or scared of me?", Remus asked her incredulously.

"Hey everyone goes coo-coo during their time of month. You just go extreme. It's chill. No harm, no foul.", Harry said merrily as if it was a daily occurrence like sun rising or Moony answering questions in class.

"Harry, I am a werewolf!!", Remus whispered yelled at her as if worried for her sanity, even as he nervously looked around.

"Duh, were you confused?", Harry said sarcastically

"I could have killed you! Maimed you! Converted you!", Remus whispered in agitation

"But you didn't! You actually acted as a savior. I don't get why you are fussing about it.", Harry said with a yawn as she gently patted Remus's arm

"The fuss is that every month I become a monster!", Remus said with fire in his eyes as tried to show his wolf

Harry sighed deeply and said," Hey at least for your troubles, you get amazing reflexes, night vision, smelling power and physical strength. And I am sure beating you in duel must be almost impossible. Trust me, Remus, I have seen Monsters, you are nowhere near the country they live in."

"I..I..its not...I", Remus struggled to complete his thought.

"Remus, I *know* Monsters. Real, deranged and cruel humans. I ...I know what's it's like to feel hopelessly out of control and not be able to control your actions or mind. Even if you had hurt me, I don't think I would have blamed you. You have no control on yourself during that time. If we wont blame a person under imperious spell for their actions, why would I blame you for something that you are suffering under? I have been hurt way worse by people who have full control of themselves. If you were a monster, you wont be riddled with guilt and sorrow at last night events. You were actually quite friendly for a werewolf."

Marauders looked at her with mixture of intrigue and awe as Harry absentmindedly scratched her arm.

"I am dangerous!", Remus whispered hotly as he stomped his foot

"I am sure, you are.", Harry said sarcastically as she eyed his fluffy wooly jumper ensemble.

James and Sirius snorted and relaxed. Sirius escorted Harry towards the chairs with fanfare as James gave her candy to eat.

"Harry!", Remus said almost petulantly at being judged as non-threatening.

She grinned mischievously as she ate the candy with a spark in her eyes.

"Are you mad that James has given me your candy?", Harry asked as she clearly toyed with him.

"*No*! Wait.. how do you know its mine?", Remus asked suspiciously.

"Because you are looking at it as if I have asked for your first born.", Harry said deviously.

The rest three howled in laughter as Remus stared at her incredulously.

"Remus, dont worry about it.", Harry said with a warm smile

Remus stared at her for a while and then, relaxed as he took a seat too. Remus smiled at her as she winked at him. James wanted to change the topic to a more light conversation or he was sure Remus's

guilt would bubble up again.

"You guys! Madam Promfrey lets Harry do as she pleased in the Wing. Last time Sirius was there, he was chained to the bed because he was being a very ruff boy.", James joked as Sirius rolled his eyes.

"Why was he in hospital wing?", Harry asked worriedly.

"He wanted to see how long he could go unshowered before Minnie dragged him to Wing to get checked.", James said as he popped open some snacks.

"To answer your unasked question, it took 5 hrs.", Peter said deadpanned

"Stop pawing my best sweets, Padfoot. And that 5hrs was only because he decided to have a mud fight with the batch in middle of class and was hurt by tripping over a branch.", James said as he chuckled

"I was fine, there was absolutely no need for the unnecessary trip.", Sirius grumbled as he snatched the snack right from under James's mouth.

"Or maybe you are masters of getting on people's nerves", Peter gave a reason helpfully.

"She was being over dramatic and it didn't help that you told her with your bloody innocence dripping face that I didn't remember who you were. As if I would ever forget you!", Sirius complained as he smacked James on head in annoyance

"Yeah, that's why Madam Promfrey had leashed you up.", Remus said as if he couldn't stop himself

"Anyways he was scrubbed from head to toe and then groomed into the prefect boy!", James chortled

"Haha. Nice crown!", Sirius retorted sarcastically

"Isn't it?", James said excitedly as he adjusted it and put his best regal self forward.

"It was the gift bestowed upon the greatest, smartest and awesomest brother by the badarse, smart and stunning Harry. It came with Lion ensemble but Harry feared it would make everyone fall in love with me more.", James said proudly

"The world will clearly explode if that happened.", Remus said with an eye roll

"More??", Peter squeaked mockingly at same time

"I think the gift might lead to his head growing bigger. Wonder if we can find a room to fit it along with his inflated ego. Don't think the world will you survive the trauma of it.", Sirius added 'solemnly'

Harry coughed to cover her laughter as James gave her a look. James opened his mouth to retort when Remus butt in with another random topic, clearly designed to not speak about the awesomeness that is Potter Hair.

"Are you joining Hogwarts, Harry?

"From next year onwards, I think so. I have to give OWLs next month and based on that I guess, we will have to see if it will be worth coming to school.", Harry said shrugging.

"Where did you study before?", Peter asked her curiously

"I was homeschooled. Dad didn't believe formal education was worth anything. He was a Ruin Master and thought he could teach me anything I ever needed to learn.", Harry said distractedly as Sirius started to visibly sniff her hair like a freaking dog

"Oh, do you need help in for your exam? I could drop by Potters to help you if needed. ", Remus offered with a smile as Peter pinched Sirius to stop with the sniffers act.

"That would be fantastic! Thank you! I would need all the help I can get, honestly. I don't even know what I know anymore.", Harry mumbled the last part with a lost look on her face.

James knew all the four of them had heard her with their animal ears. He hated that look on her face. He felt so helpless and its one thing James Potter hates, its feeling of helplessness. If he could find a way to help Remus, he was definitely gonna help his sister out.

"Do you know Quidditch, Harry?", Sirius asked her suddenly.

She jumped a bit as she came back to present. James smiled at Sirius in appreciation.

"Uh... yeah. Used to play randomly. Usually as seeker.", Harry said

with a happy face

"That's fantastic! We can play everyday in our backyard then! Summer is going to be bonkers! I am chaser, Sirius, here, is beater. Remus does quidditch commentary. His head is usually in the gutter.", James said last part conspiratorially.

"Oh piss off! It was one time! I had a crush on her and she played amazingly in that match.", Remus defended himself, even as he flushed

"Right and your response was to say on mic for whole Hogwarts to hear ' Victoria, my gorgeous beater, if I knew you rode like this, I would have asked you out sooner!"", Sirius said chortling

"Then Bam! Bludger right in his face! His nasally commentary for the rest of the game is still legendary." , James added

"Oh sod off!", Remus said petulantly

Harry laughed out loud and they all looked at her indulgently.

"Oh, we have more stories..", James started enthusiastically

"Of your brother.", Remus barged in.

James's "Hey!" was ignored

"Do you know of his eternal love, Lily Evans?", Sirius asked her with a wicked smile.

James groaned and muttered some choice words.

Seeing Harry's intrigue, Sirius took the lead," Well...she is a gorgeous red head, on whom your brother has announced his undying love. Although looks like the only thing living is her disdain of him."

"In first year, he brought Lily a Lily as a peace offering. You would think 'so cute', right? So did she, till it sputtered water on face when she went to sniff it. Lily had chased and beaten him with a broom.", Sirius laughed as he relived the whole thing again

"The problem with the plan was the plan... but I will end up marrying her. Mark my words.", James said defensively.

"Famous last words.", Remus said sarcastically

"Don't loose hope, James. How will we have entertainment otherwise?", Sirius said jokingly

James smacked him with a pillow in retaliation.

"Last year, your brother had declared, in front of whole year, that he was going to marry Lily Evans. He immediately had bees attacking him.", Remus added with a fond smile

"Yesterday, he was 'flirting' with her. As soon as she came near him, he removed his specs and said, with confidence of a man that won the Quidditch Cup, 'Lily, you are looking blurry'. He had to express order a new pair of glasses."

"Oh you remember in forth year, how he.."

James knew he could have moved the conversation to some other topic but seeing Harry light up and laugh at his embarrassing wooing moments, he just didn't have the heart. It warmed his heart to see how easily she fit into his group. They talked till it was time for Harry to leave Hogwarts.

He grinned as he saw her Floo away. He has a sister! That was so cool! He wondered if he could introduce her as his twin, who was homeschooled or something. He grinned at the reaction he sure was gonna get.

Now it was time to prank the Slytherin gits for being related to people who tortured his sisters.

Chapter 5

"Do you think we could change Uranus hair color to green? I think it would really bring out his eyes", Harry whispered to Sirius as her eyes twinkled

"Ah my love, i knew you had it in you to be a Proper Lady. Such care, of course we can color him green.", Sirius said regally.

Harry snorted very unladylike, which made Sirius grin even wider.
Harry lazily grinned at Carrow and Walter, who were definitely judging and bitching about Harry. Sirius turned their hats into mini clouds that would drench them till evening.

Harry's revelation to the Wizarding World was explosive. Being an opulent Pureblood Potter and a survivor of Voldemort's horrors, Harry found herself in epicenter of attention. It had concerned Potters that this popularity might put Harry back in focus of Death Eaters. He had a very strong suspicion that Harry didn't mind that at all. She seemed delighted that Death Eaters would focus their energy on her than others. She would often go for walks in the Potters manor grounds for hours at times, prompting James to consider making a map to keep track of her.

The public interest has gotten to a point where Minister of Magic had offered Auror protection for Harry. Harry had politely declined it. Harry never even blinked an eye when she would be hounded by public whenever she stepped in public. Aunt Euph declared that they would only shop in Muggle shops after the first hounding experience to prevent Harry from such a disgusting exploitations. It might also have to do with the whispers and rumors that were being spread like wildfire regarding Harry, her injuries, her alliance or her battle riddled appearance. Not that Harry cared, she found them amusing.

Marauders have become very close to her, except Peter who was out exploring Ireland for the summers. That git! Moony would teach her theoretical concepts while Sirius and James helped brush her practical aspects of magic. Uncle Monty was delighted at how skilled Harry was in dueling. Everyone refused to say out loud on *how* she got that good but she was bloody good. She was a natural in protective magic, she did need some work with potions.

James had insisted on creating happy memories for Harry, so Potters were planning a trip since Harry's OWLS were over. Sirius knew James

was very worried about Harry and her nightmares. Sirius has seen Harry up and about at all odd hours of day and night. Sleep came scantly for her. There was this worry that was a constant in her eyes, even if she was laughing. Aunt Euph thought it was best for her to do things that made her happy or kept her busy.

So here they were all, enrolled in Pureblood Business Summer Classes. Yes it was a thing and yes everyone, who could get into this club, tried to get in. This is where connections are formed, futures made and snoozer personalities cultivated. If you wanted to learn art of being condescending, gathering 'intel' (read: gossip like its air) and have skin thinner than a bubble, all the while having stick permanently up your arse, this was the best place to be in. So, of course, Reg thrived here.

Uncle Monty had been handling Alex's side of business since beginning so that Alex could have the freedom and backup to explore his passion. He can never imagine his brother ever doing anything like that. He always wondered how his life would have been if he had been in a loving family. Anyways on top of Family fortune, Harry's eccentric father had amassed a fortune of his own through Ruin Exploration. This made Harry as rich as James.

Potters didn't want Harry to be dependent on anything or anyone ever and had pushed her to undertake her father's side of business once she was off age. Unfortunately, that meant going to rich Pureblood politics and classes for days on end and enduring courtship attempts by troll Purebloods. They were taught business, politics, law, etiquettes and dueling under same Professor. Private classes were taken by family themselves but the basics were taught together. Each week a family head would supervise. Sirius loathed the week his father was assigned. This was such a week. He hated how his father's eyes were always trained on him, Reg might as well be invisible to his father.

Sirius could tutor the tutor on a lot of these subjects. He had been drilled with this crap since he was 4 years. He was just so bored with it all but it gave him a good reason to be out of house for a month. Plus James, and now Harry, made it fun. Lupins have chosen to ignore tradition to prevent scrutiny.

James was talking, or more likely unintentionally flirting, with Orchid Watson. James was a brilliant flirt as long as it wasn't a conscious decision. 'You are looking blurry' being the prime example. Reg was flirting with Candice Abott, who seemed interested as well. Interesting.. a Slytherin wooing a Hufflepuff. Maybe this would make

Reg see some sense.

Uranus had been trying to unsuccessfully win Harry's 'favor' (because Pureblood lived in Victorian era). Harry's disgust would roll off her body, which Uranus thought was a sign of attraction because he doubled down on flirting. Harry has started to pretend that she cant see him when he starts to hound her, which rest of the class was happy to follow. This made Uranus think he was invisible and boy, did he do some weird stuff. That was the last time any potential match of his talked to him.

To avoid Harry suffering through 'courtship' stupidity, with James's permission and relief, they have been sitting together. It has been some of the best time he had spent here. He was so happy that he didn't even want to think about why his very traditional father has not said a word against Harry, when he never shut up about all other proper Purebloods. Or how Reg has been striking conversations with her, on his own, even debating respectfully with Harry.

"I think James might need help.", Harry said as she pointed at her brother, who was slowly inching away from an eager Orchid.

James fell down on the lawn, as Sirius and Harry guffawed. Still Father said nothing. Was that a small smile that tugged on his face? Clearly Sirius has let the happy hormones impact him too much. Sirius went to rescue James from a worried Orchid. Orchid was sweet but James's heart was already taken by a fiery muggleborn witch.

"James deer, have you been lost without me.", Sirius with his most sultry voice.

James 'fainted' in his arms and said despondently," How can anything make sense to me, when you, my heart...my soul, have forsaken me."

"Never, love. I can never leave you alone, my hart.", Sirius said lovingly

"My heart feels whole with you here. Lets go for a walk.", James said with heart eyes

"Ah, as much as it would give me pleasure, we have the class to attend, dear.", Sirius said with 'sadness'

"Another thorn in our love, but we shall prevail, my love. You wait and see!", James saying it dramatically took Sirius's arm to promenade to class as they left a befuddled Orchid behind.

"Where's Harry?", James asked happily as they strutted towards their seats

"Uh..oh!! Merlin! We should have saved *her* than you!", Sirius said in horror as he saw Harry being interrogated by his father.

They both changed direction, only for James to be stopped by the Professor. Sirius decided he would be a lone Knight in Shining Amour then.

"Apologies, Lord Black. I was a bit distracted. I will take your leave.", Harry said regally.

Sirius would have snorted if it was just them. She was adorable when she tried to be regal and proper.

"Ah, yes of course, young lady..", Lord Black said with what Sirius suspects is a smile.

Sirius decided to save her from one of the potentially most boring conversation. He draped his arm around her shoulder.

"Sirius, you are late.", Harry said deadpanned Sirius without looking at him.

Sirius loved that she didn't care that Lord Black of Purest and Richest house of wizarding world was standing there listening to her diss his Heir. Sirius, delighted, smacked a kiss on her cheek as she sighed.

"Why, my love, you wound me!. Here I was fetching the gorgeous lady her favorite sweet.", Sirius said with puppy eyes.

Harry rolled her eyes, snatched the sweet and walked away from the Black family. No formal bye. No permission to leave the presence of almighty Lord Black. Oh, Sirius would write songs about this gorgeous, amazing woman. Sirius, grinning ear to ear, bowed to his father and literally crashed down next to her. Harry snorted at him and grinned brightly at James, who grinned back, as the class settled down.

"Why is Rosier glaring at me like I stole her broomstick?", Harry asked curiously

"Ah, you stole something.", James said with a smirk.

Sirius groaned and refused to answer Harry's intrigued expression. Of

course James, the tosser, had no such qualms.

"Ah, you see Harry, this dog likes to have fun. He ended up having a lot of fun with the beautiful but slightly uptight Rosier. Since then she had dibs on Sirius.", James explained with glee.

"You barmy, I was zonked because you had stolen the whole firewhiskey and.... whatever.", Sirius fumbled through his explanation as Harry's eyes stared at him

He didn't know why but Harry made him nervous sometimes. He didn't want her to think he was some.. some dog. Well he was one but not that *one*. What were they talking about again?

"Ah did I become your Gandalf?", Harry asked curious

"Huh?", both Pureblood boys asked at same time.

"Muggle reference. He has a famous quote 'You shall not pass'.", Harry explained

"Ah, yes. You are Gandalf then. Except you are stopping .."

"Nothing! She is stopping nothing. Please I am not interested in them!", Sirius said defensively

"Uh-huh", Potters said disbelievingly together

They had same expression and manner of saying it. Sirius, sometimes, couldn't believe that these two have met recently. They were soo similar. It was ridiculous. From their enthusiasm for quidditch, food, flying, family and, well, him they were both a lot alike. James had floated idea of introducing to the world that they were twins separated at birth. Harry had said nothing and it was dropped. Like he plans to drop something on Butcher and Broad. They have been eye fucking Harry since the beginning of class. He flicked his wand and both of them started to scratch themselves.

Yeah, good luck trying to woo her, arseholes.

He glanced at the topic that the Professor was teaching. He groaned. He was already so bored. He had literally written a thesis for his father on this topic, *two* years ago. Suddenly his eyes met another set of Grey eyes that were trained on them.

"Everything okay?", Sirius asked Harry.

"Uh, yeah? Why?", Harry said distractedly as she tired to listen the boring lecture

Sirius just signaled towards his father with his eyes. Sirius knew James had warded the area now with a non-verbal spell. So there was no risk of being overheard. The class had started and father was safely away.

"Oh, *that*. He was just asking me how I was finding everything and if you were treating me good. Then if he should visit our home, James. I told him its his wish and then you came bumbling in.", Harry said casually as she wrote notes.

"You *What?*", James and Sirius asked her, stunned

"What? How can I tell if he can visit Uncle? Isn't it his problem to figure out?", Harry said with a shrug, still an innocent summer child.

"Harry, you....you...Oh *Merlin*! This is going to be such a *mess*!" James groaned.

"What are you talking about?", Harry asked flabbergasted

"Harry, my father was asking how our 'courting' was going and whether he should take the next step and ask your Uncle.", Sirius managed to spit it out

Blood drained from Harry's face as she reran the whole conversation in her head.

"OH. MY.GOD! I didn't even think of it in this context! I genuinely thought he was just being polite after I bumped into him. What are we going to do?", Harry asked, terrified

"Its fine, I will clear it with dad but you both can't 'talk' like that everyday. Ugh, I will have to practice more non-verbal spells to shoot at your 'suitors'", James grumbled.

Harry stared at Uranus and shivered in disgust.

"Wait, how is that possible? I thought you were supposed to marry a 28 sacred family girl? I am not Pureblood-pureblood. I have half-blood grandmother!", Harry asked curious

"I think my Father is willing to look past it as long as you are a 'Pureblood', especially with my rebellious nature.", Sirius said as he thought it out

"What happens in a courtship period?", Harry asked more curious then anything else

"Well, we would exclusively be seeing each other. No one else is allowed to broach the two with a proposal. Then after a year of formal courtship, parents check with their wards if they want to get engaged. If yes, then marriage. If no, then no harm, no foul. You both move on.", James explained patiently.

"Will it make it easier for you at home?", Harry asked Sirius

"Yeah, I think it will make them calm down a bit. It might be indication that despite being anti-them, I can still be a valid Heir. I mean, apart from disagreeing with all their ideology and bigotry, I am a decent Heir. Once I become Heir, unless I die, that can't be changed. I don't care about it all. They can all die on their inflated ego and purity of blood. I can handle myself. I don't care if I have to give it all up. I will *not* agree to their craziness. Don't worry about them, I can handle them.", Sirius said confidently

"I know you can, doesn't mean you have to.", Harry said gently

"She is right, you know. Just because you can do it alone, doesn't mean you have to.", James added

"Is there someone in school that you want to date?", Harry asked curiously

James snorted and said, "This twat has no interest unless its about rebellion, bikes or just fun."

"Well, then why cant we do a courtship?", Harry asked innocently

"*WHAT?*'

"*HARRY ARE YOU INSANE?"*

"Calm down, you two. Jeez! I am not saying like romantically but strategically. Being courted would mean I can stop with this nonsense of being approached and flirted. I have a feeling in school it would be worse. I have absolutely no interest in dating and this would give me an excuse. Sirius can breath easier at home and by the time this charade is over, Sirius would be Heir and I would have time to have a footing in this world. Sirius can have his casual fun in Hogwarts, I don't care. No harm, no foul. We all win!", Harry said excitedly

James and Sirius looked at each other. All she said made strategic sense. Its just there was this feeling of mischief afoot that was going to blindside them. But Sirius has never shied away from an explosive situation, so what the hell.

In celebration, he converted Uranus and Lestrange hair bright red with sparkles. It wont come off for days. Harry burst out laughing seeing those two idiots in red hair studying stoically, unaware of being prank victim. As Sirius stared at Harry's face, he realized it wont be the worst thing in the world to court Harry.

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“*Who* is courting *who*?”, Dad asked James incredulously

James cleared his throat to explain *calmly* everything they had decided. His mouth has apparently decided to not cooperate at all. Not even an ‘Oo’ was willing to face the growing anger of a new father of an almost adult daughter. James cleared his throat again willing his throat to work as dad stared impatiently and slightly murderously at him.

“Sirius …ahem…Harry.”, James garbled

In his mind, he has given an eloquent speech about how this plan was supposed to give Harry and Sirius breathers in their stressful lives. How it was a genius plan which would help better both their lives and prevent James from being imprisoned in Azkaban for murdering hormone-crazy-teenage-horny-boys lusting after his sister. How his brother, in all but blood, would be able to breath easier at his fanatic and bloodist *home* and Harry would be free of stupid societal obligations.

Dad did not look impressed at all. He didn't even seem to be in vicinity of it. Sirius was as good as a son to his parents but they also knew his reputation and his relationships. James sighed as he braced himself.

“*Why*?”, Dad asked dangerously

James gulped a bit. He had to sell it. He had, like a bubbling idiot, taken the responsibility of smoothing things with dad. He hadn't realized that his father and Harry's guardian were two very different personalities that resided in his father.

James said hurriedly,

“Harry was getting tired of being ‘courted ‘ by random stuck-up Purebloods, when she is not in mind frame for anything resembling relationship. She is happy with the class but this aspect of class annoys her. She is still recovering from everything and this adds ridiculous, useless pressure on her. She cant refuse advances of everyone as

Houses would get offended by it and neither does she want anything to do with it for now. Sirius's family is making his life very difficult at home. I am afraid they would start to torture him if the level of craziness continues. His mother has apparently started to go off rockers given his very proclaimed inclination towards light side. "

"When Lord Black approached Harry and asked if he should meet you, she didn't understand the subtext and said yes. Harry, then, came with the brilliant plan that if they both were to 'court' for a year and then break it off, then both would be better off for it. Harry won't be approached by idiotic Purebloods and have time to figure herself out. Sirius would be able to calm his family down a bit. He would soon be declared Heir and can start dictating terms as per his wish then. Plus we wont have to murder horny guys lusting after Harry in Hogwarts. So all in all, we think its a great plan!"

Dad froze as he processed James's word diarrhea and then stared out of window.

"Lord Black approached Harry on his own?", Dad asked skeptically

"Yeah and had polite conversation with her. Apparently he even smiled, which freaked Sirius out completely. Also the fact that Lord Black hasn't said a word against Harry, despite the shenanigans we do frequently. Reg had hinted it to Sirius that their father has shown interest in Harry beyond his usual get-to-know-progeny-of -other-houses. Given how anti-everything his family is about everything decent, this behavior was odd to say the least. Sirius believes it his father's way of waving a white flag as they would still get a 'pureblood' daughter-in-law from a prominent family while keeping Sirius in their orbit at same time.", James concluded thoughtfully

"And there's no funny business going on between two?", Dad asked suspiciously

"Eww.. *gross*! NO, Dad! You really think Sirius would do that? She is family and Sirius would never do anything to knowingly hurt her.", James said absolute confidence

"Hmmm...the plan does have merits and little drawbacks, especially if Orion seems to be accepting Harry. I didn't realize the courting scene has already begun for you lot. I should have realized it earlier, it would be too much unnecessary pressure on her for no reason. I was so focused on ensuring Harry had a future that I might have pushed her into a lot of things without checking with her. Hmm...", Dad

contemplated

"We will leave for the vacation tomorrow. We all will go to Australia and come back just before you have to go to Hogwarts.", Dad declared as he formed plans without asking Harry first again.

James sighed. It was not a bad plan. The classes were over and Harry's OWLs were done, it was as good as a time to relax and let her heal her soul. Plus James had a inkling that dad might be trying to avoid creating any *Sirius* problem too.

"COME IN, you two hooligans. ", Dad said loudly at his study gate

Sirius and Harry came in sheepishly at being caught trying to eavesdrop as Dad shook his head indulgently.

“I am not happy to be told about *courtship* in this manner but given its a ruse, I will allow it. But both of you, listen to me very carefully. One, if either of you end up hurting the other, they would have to face me. I love you both and I don't want you hurt. Two, for the world it should resemble legit. So act but *only* act like a couple but *never* in front of me. Three, you would have to go on official dates to make it seem legit. Official can be anything, honestly. I don't prescribe to old stupid traditions but your dad, Sirius, is a stickler for it. So do check with him about his requirements for this to be fulfilled.”, Dad said seriously as all three nodded.

They could easily sell this part. They all loved spending time with each other anyways and it just gave them more opportunity to spend time together. James was already forming plans of the dates all three of them could go to with Remus as chaperone. Remus would have been the worst chaperone to have if it was an actual date. He was an old soul trapped in young boy's body. It was a tragedy for some other time.

“Lastly and most importantly, if you, Sirius, do anything untoward or hurt Harry in anyway, you will have to deal with me. Got it?”, Dad warned Sirius, who gulped but nodded.

Dad breathed in deeply and said,” Alright. When is Orion coming then?”

“Today at tea.”, James said with an innocent smile.

“WHAT? EUPHEMIA!!”, Dad panicked.

“What happened? Did anyone get hurt? Why would you call me like a caveman? You would think Death Eaters were attacking! Merlin! What is the matter with you? Screaming like Moaning Myrtle in bathroom.”, Mom grumbled.

“Lord Black is coming…”

“You make it sound like Voldemort is coming. Its Orion, he used to literally live here once upon a time. And I know that already and have made his favorite pie. You need to get dressed. Its almost noon, honestly, Monty. “, Mom said as she rolled her eyes

Dad looked at the kids and asked deadpanned, “Her before me?”

Kids smiled adorably at him. Dad had a reluctant smile on his face.

“Now, now. No need to get testy. Come on then, if you all are done here.”, Mom said with a smile as she shimmed out

"Oh Orion! Welcome back, it been a while.", Mom voice floated in the study

They all stared at each other before making a beeline out of office. Time to face the mightest, purest and stickler for rules, Lord Orion Black.

Chapter End Notes

The chapter is a bit smaller than my usual. Hope you guys like it.

Chapter 7

"Uff, you git! Merlin, did you grow few inches again?", James asked him annoyed

"Yup", Sirius answered smugly as his P popped

James rolled his eyes and continued his journey towards dozing. Sirius settled beside James, using him as a pillow, as he peacefully stared at the Potter's Mansion garden. Potter Mansion was huge and surrounded with acres of forest on top of hill. There was a lovely bloom circling the Quidditch Pitch.

Harry was running, by *choice (*Merlin knows why), around Potter's Quidditch yard. Harry had developed this habit of running like a crazy person since she came back from the hospital. There was a restlessness that Harry carried like her shadow. James swears that she would vanish for hours during these runs, which Harry had dismissed as paranoia. James was very close to creating a map of Potter Mansion similar to one they were creating for Hogwarts.

Staying ideal was almost an assault for Harry. Hell, even during her hospital stay, she had gotten so bored that she went on strolls to pass time. Aunty Euph's yell broke records that day when she had discovered this, especially since Harry was supposed to be resting.

Harry could easily pass for James's twin. They had the same craziness, obliviousness and passion for quidditch. She was sweet, caring, polite but carried the Potter trademarks of mischief, sarcasm, loyalty and, most important, ability to fly as if you were born on a broom (James words). The natural charisma and leadership reeled everyone in within minutes.

Sirius has been around attractive people since he can remember. Heir to richest and oldest Sacred family plus his devilishly handsome looks made him a very desirable option. He has never met anyone as intriguing and alluring as Harry, who didn't seem to be interested in him that way. That, in itself, was a point of its own.

"She still doing that?", Sirius asked as he saw Harry sprint across the Quidditch Pitch.

Maybe she is imagining a Dragon chasing her across field. Or a situation where she has to run away from Uranus.

" She had a terrible nightmare, so since sun has been out she is jogging till she cant breath or collapses out of shear exhaustion.", James mumbled as he rubbed his eyes tiredly

"Did either of you get any sleep last night?', Sirius asked in concern.

James looked exhausted and troubled.

"Caught few here and there. We stayed up late talking about stars.", James said as he worriedly eyed Harry

"You okay?", Sirius asked in growing concern as he patted James's messier than usual hair

James blurted out what was eating him inside,

" I am worried about her, Padfoot! She is not fine! She gets horrible nightmares. She is haunted by her past and worried about future. She is still dealing with dark spells those bastards put on her. How will she cope up in Hogwarts? Slytherins will taunt her. Gaud her. What if they do something to her? Or say something that would take her back to that miserable time?"

"They might take our anger out on her. Its bad enough she is related to us but she, herself, is on top list of death eaters. Bones warned Dad that Death Eaters might try to harm Harry. I dont think they would be stupid enough to hurt her when she is under Dumbledore's care. But *accidents* do happen. We *can't* be with her all the time. How do I keep her safe from everything?"

Sirius said seriously as Harry started doing some sort pushups," Prongs, she is one of the strongest person we have met. You know her magic aura is strong and she is an incredible witch. You are right though. Dealing with slimy Slytherins will take planning and constant vigilance. We could ask the girls to keep an eye. I am sure being around us will, anyways, get tiring for her after a point of time."

"Mom says that I am panicking worse than dad, which is ridiculous. Dad is total paranoid now that Harry will leave his eyesight. I think the only reason he hasn't asked Harry to be homeschooled is because its *her* wish to study in Hogwarts.", James said worriedly as a huge yawn escaped him.

"I think you guys are worrying excessively. If we take enough precautions, Harry will be fine. Harry has this charisma which gravitates people towards her in a good way, not Snape way. Hell, she

had made a friend of Reg. This is no small feat! Getting a stuck up Pureblood fanatic to be civil to a future Gryffindor is a miracle on it own. I am telling you, she is Merlin come to earth once again! I think she would be fine. She can hold her own well enough in a duel, we have seen it.", Sirius mused

"I am sure Lily and Harry will hit it off and you know what a mother hen Lily is. She would take care of her when I am not around.", James said on his own tangent, completely bypassing everything Sirius said so logically. Sirius would have felt hurt if he didn't love this hairy git so much.

"Umm.. Prongs, Harry is your sister. Lily might not want to Harry's friend if it means being hounded by you constantly.", Sirius offered tentatively to his obtuse best friend.

James said with a thoughtful face," I can beg her."

Sirius hummed. That would be interesting. Lily would probably use the blasting hex or maybe attack him with birds this time. It was useless to stop James once his mind was set on a task. James was an idiot that way. But as James's best friend, it was Sirius's duty to pull James out of the pit James would willingly, unknowingly, throw himself in.

Harry had now proceeded to do some form of muggle exercise called yoga. Harry was getting slimmer by the day. When they met James and Harry were almost same height, till James shot up few inches in a month. Australia has definitely given Harry a good tan which made her look slightly less unhealthy.

Speaking of unhealthy, Sirius said jokingly to Harry with tinge of worry, "I know some people are into torture for pleasure but this, surely, is a cry for help."

Harry rolled her eyes as she laid back on the James's stomach, getting her breathing under control, while sweating like pig. Her tan close up made her even more mystical. James patted her head affectionately as he dozed off.

"Don't worry darling, we can find some other ways of pleasure if you are not into this.", Harry said jokingly as she patted his arm lightly.

Sirius mind provided him several scenarios of pleasure. He grinned as he absentmindedly traced her arm.

"Sirius, I know you like me all hot and bothered but not today darling, I am all out.", Harry muttered as she stretched lazily.

Sirius grinned lopsidedly at her as James sleepily grunted in disapproval at their flirting. It was a progress that James could identify flirting.

"I can wait till you feel better, my dear. You are getting all skeleton-y.", Sirius said in concern as he poked her thin arm.

"Are you and James sure, you both are not twins? Its like speaking to same people.", Harry complained playfully

"Ah it's mental derangement that ties us together, love. Nothing can connect two people better than this. But don't worry my heart is yours. Soul, unfortunately, has already been claimed by your brother few years ago.", Sirius said lightly

Harry snorted and wiped sweat off her forehead.

"Harry, in all 'me'-ness, you really should stop torturing yourself with so much exercising. It can't be good for your health.", Sirius said seriously as James grunted in agreement.

"You two are twins! You are both just jerking me around saying its not true. James, without fail, wonders what pleasure I get by 'torturing' myself and then force feeds me till I am full like a turkey. Every. Single. Day.", Harry grumbled

"You need it.", James mumbled he poked Harry on the side.

Harry swatted his hand away, ignoring the important topic being discussed, asked," Aren't you early, Sirius? Weren't we supposed to go later today to Diagon Alley? I thought you had to study family business or something."

"Ah, love, you really think I would let such a trivial thing as business stop from visiting my gorgeous intended. Don't think I didn't notice you side stepping the topic. We will circle back to it when James is back to the land of living.", Sirius promised with a smirk.

Harry rolled her eyes and then proceeded to ignore the handsome young strapping lad sitting next to her, who was giving her complete attention, and started to meditate. Sirius could never understand this woman, first torture yourself with running and then mediate to fall asleep. Must be a muggle thing, Sirius decided. As Harry went deeper

into meditation, her magic started to spread and he could feel her magic covering him in protective circle. He felt honored. It was sign of outmost trust for magic to react this way.

He gawked as Harry glowed, while looking innocent and glorious. He hated that some his relatives probably had a hand in her torture. He got why James had become so protective of her. Guaranty James was always a mother hen, this situation just amplified it. Sirius felt anxiety build in him thinking about how they were going to shield Harry from the evil all around them.

James was into deep sleep if his snores were anything to go by. Sirius ensured that no one was looking their way and turned into Padfoot. He has always felt calmer as a dog. He saw Harry in new light. Her body was decorated with survival scars like a moon surface, giving her a beautiful and intriguing edge. Her arm had a long, deep and painful looking scar. As if someone has taken a knife and just tore through her skin, muscle and nerves without a second thought. There was a lighting mark on her forehead. He didn't know what would cause that but it was deeply troubling.

His eyes zeroed in on her "I must not tell lies' scar. Some sadistic bastard had experimented blood quills on her. Made her write in her own bloods for days till it was engraved into her skin. She did think that is how she managed to recover enough to make her escape. But what a bunch of beasts!

Sirius turned back to human form and sat beside Harry, providing her with his shoulder, if she needed, as he gazed at the clouds. She leaned on his shoulder after some time and sighed in peace. He loved these moments with her. It was just theirs.

He hadn't realized till the business classes were over, how used to her presence he had become. They had become a trio of there own, occasionally joined by Moony. He turned and kissed Harry's forehead scar. Harry had almost melted the first time he had done it on a whim, since then that was his spot and he took every opportunity to shower her with affection.

He pulled back and stared into the stormy green eyes. There was a pull towards her that he couldn't explain. This need to make that ever present storm go away. To annihilate anyone that was responsible for that look in her eyes. He cared about her almost as much as he cared about Moony, even more if he was being honest. He hated seeing that anxiety, fear, pain and restlessness in her. It broke his heart thinking

about her in pain and all that torture.

Their moment was broken when Uncle Monty called them in. Reg must have come for the shopping trip. Sirius got up and pulled Harry up using one arm. Sirius shoved James with his feet to wake him up at same time.

"Seee... this is why I need to train! You literally lifted me off by one arm! ", Harry grumbled as she started mumbling of other trainings she could do.

"You can't exercise more! You would die! People die from exercising too much too. Watching you exercise makes me tired..."

Sirius bit his lips as James continued to whine to Harry about the horror of exercising and how *her* exercising was aging *him*. Sirius entered the living room to see Reg excitedly talk with Harry as Mother stood there judging Harry.

Sirius removed his robe and stood in his glorious muggle clothes right in his mother's eye line. He casually leaned against the wall. Sirius knew how to murderously distract Mother without utterly a word. He had honed this skills in years to perfection. James grinned at Sirius, knowing exactly what he was doing.

"Oh..", Harry surprise tone broke him out of his stare down with his *lovely* mother.

Harry's face started to flush as her eyes trailed his entire length. He could see appreciation in them as her eyes clashed with his. There was a different type of storm brewing in her eyes now. He liked this storm. Sirius had been working out furiously at home for past month to expel *his* nervous energy. The result seemed to be worth it as Sirius grinned wolfishly at Harry, who turned beetroot red at being caught.

Uncle cleared his throat pointedly. Sirius adopted an expression more suited for a funeral. Uncle lips twitched a bit as he stared at Sirius. Sirius heard Harry giggle.

"Alright, then you Marauders. Lets go shopping. Remember do not go anywhere alone and be back by 5. Off you go!", Aunt Euph interrupted Uncle.

Aunt Euph shushed Uncle Monty, who clearly wanted to add few instruction point to Sirius. Sirius's *lovely* Mother was thankfully not accompanying them. Sirius shuddered at that thought. He would have

preferred to spend an hour with Snape than bear that horror show. Well, no. Ugh.. maybe. Anywayssss, his mother was not coming. So these few hours should be great. Sirius waving cheerfully at his ticked off mother, as he flooed away, whistling.

Chapter 8

"Lily, please."

"Potter, no.", Lily said firmly

Sirius and Remus stood a step behind James to intervene once he blows it. James had a talent of blowing it with her. *Always*. It has been the constant entertainment in their Hogwarts life. And if Sirius was to bet, it would be for their lifetime too.

"Lily, I just wanted..", James begged

"Potter, I have absolutely no interest in what you want.", Lily said dismissing him.

James made a face that meant either he had a very huge dump to take or he was going to start bawling. Neither possibilities were pleasant. Sirius nudged Remus to help their hopeless friend and prevent the rest of the world from suffering along with this moronic lover. Remus sighed loudly. Remus must have blown out all the air in his body to curse his luck when he became friends with us, the two bumbling idiots.

"Lily, ignore this prat but will you please listen to me?", Remus interjected politely.

Lily tilted her head in agreement. James let out a hurt noise. Sirius, Mary and Alice stifled a giggle. James and Lily's love story would be a stuff of legends. Stories, poems and essays would be written on it. Mostly by Remus in anger for all he had to tolerate but still, Sirius thought it counted.

"What this tosser is trying to request is that you meet Harry without any prejudice that you may have because of her association with this idiotic maniac.", Remus said pointing to James.

James placed his hands on his heart as if he has been stabbed. Sirius grinned. Remus rolled his eyes and continued appeasing the Future Mrs. Potter.

"You might have missed it because James forgot to use *please* and *favor* in his pathetic attempt at request.", Remus said sarcastically

James pulled out his best move, the deer eyes or Bambi eyes. It was

oddly moving and never failed to get James what he wanted. Except Lily just blinked in confusion, completely unaffected by this lovable idiot (emphasis on idiot). Sirius snorted.

"I don't see why Potter wants *me* to meet his cousin?", Lily asked confused.

"My Sister.", James corrected automatically

Surprise registered on Lily's face at how protective and serious James sounded. James has always been a goofball around others. It was his charm and worked wonders to repel people, especially Lily. It was amazing who one's heart chooses to love. Always the impossible match.

"And why would you want that?", Lily asked suspiciously

"Because.. because she needs good, decent people around her. People who can support her and shield her from the arseholes in the school. In Hogwarts, as much as I want, I won't be able to be around her 24/7. There would be times when she would want some other company than us. I need her to be safe, Lily. She has been through so much that even listening to parts of it makes me lose my sleep. I am scared that in Hogwarts, the people who tortured her would use their kids or relatives to taunt her or torture her.", James said stressed

Lily was reanalyzing everything she knew about James. Her eyes, so similar to Harry's, were round with wonder and curiosity. James hardly ever got stressed in front of outsiders.

"She is fiercely independent and it annoys her when I get very protective. She tolerates protective. But I *have* to be over protective. She is my little sister. I would burn the world if it meant she would be happy and safe. I want her to have more friends and support than what we four can provide.", James continued passionately.

If surprise needed a poster, Lily's face would be the prime candidate for it. She stared at James and a number of emotions went through her. Mostly surprise and suspicion.

"I *will* murder anyone that upsets her even a little bit. Azkaban be damned! No one, and I mean *no one*, will ever hurt her again in any form. Physical or otherwise.", James finished menacingly

"And he wants Harry to feel comfortable when she reaches Hogwarts.", Sirius added with a smile to reduce the intensity of James's

protectiveness.

With James's luck, Lily would conclude that James is on path of becoming a serial killer or something. Honestly, the miscommunication between these two was legendary.

"Potter... you would never had to beg me to be her friend. I have heard wonderful things about her from Mary and Alice. I.. I have also read a lot about her in the newspapers to know she is one brave soul. Of course, I would be delighted to meet her and help her in anyway that I can.", Lily said kindly

James hugged the life out of a shocked Lily. Rest stifled their smiles.

Ah, poor Lily. She didn't know what she has agreed to! James Potter would turn her world upside down, in a good way,(mostly, Sirius was like 90% sure) as James did for others close to him. Sirius knows it first hand. His experience of being James's close person was top notch. Would 100% recommend it to anyone.

"Thank you ! Thank *you*! Wanna meet her now?", James asked her excitedly

"But Potter, you can't use your sister as a way of getting close to.."

James interrupted Lily forcefully," I will *never* use Harry. *Ever*. I won't hound you or bug you or even...even flirt or propose to you. I swear!", James said passionately

Everyone looked at him skeptically. Sirius was grinning widely. It was a positive step. A good step. Maybe now James would get his head out of his arse and be himself in front of Lily. Instead of the obnoxious self that he became when he tried to woo Lily.

"Not that I was doing a fantastic job before", James muttered in self relisation.

"You look blurry.", Sirius said as he badly imitated James.

Remus, Alice and Mary chocked back their laughter. Lily's lips twitched in smile.

"Shut it, you!", James pointed to Sirius, who grinned evilly at him

"It actually might save me from providing mocking fodder to these two sadists!", James grumbled.

"Ah, James! You give too much credit to yourself! Even without this, you would provide us with enough fodder for a lifetime. We have absolute faith in you", Remus said sagely with wild grin

James flipped a bird to them and turned to ignore them dramatically. The amount of grace James was displaying was *staggering*.

"Maybe... Maybe even we can have a fresh start as friends? Promise no hidden motives here", James asked Lily hopefully as he raised his hands to show good faith.

"Just friends, Potter.", Lily agreed tentatively

James shook Lily's hands very enthusiastically. Remus pinched James to remind him not to pull Lily's arm out of her socket in his enthusiasm. James dropped her arm and Lily's eyes stopped rattling.

"Well, then you can call me James. All my friends do.", James said with a broad smile

"Or Bambi, if you prefer.", Remus added sarcastically

"Or little Porcupine", Sirius whispered conspiratorially

"Hey! That only my mum gets to call me.", James said petulantly

Everyone grinned at that. James blew raspberry at Sirius making everyone laugh.

James dismissing their mockery (it was a talent of his) and asked excitedly, "Would you like to meet her now?"

"Oh, yeah! I have missed that badarse.", Mary said excitedly as they all started to walk towards the bookstore.

"So how is she?", Alice asked in concern

"Did she like Australia then?", Mary asked at same time

"Oh!! You should have seen her! She was riding the wave as good as she rides a broom! So obviously we had races and competitions before you know it. She was beating me soon enough. She is a natural, that one. She did have a lot of fu.."

James was run into by a stocky kid. He stumbled into Lily, who fell into Remus, who stumbled into Roseline. Roseline blushed as Remus steadied her. They all ignored the potential love birds. Hopefully

Remus would get a move on. Remus's mooning was getting on his nerves. He would never understand why guys just can't go and ask out the girl they fancied. Sirius did it all the time and it, usually, went great. *Teenagers*.

"Wormtail?", Sirius asked in worry seeing the panic in Peter's eyes.

Sirius started to look around for any sign of danger. Everything looked normal. The hustle bustle in the crowd. No one was walking threateningly or yelling or anything. A normal Diagon Alley day. Why did Peter looked like all death eaters have descended to murder him?

"Ha...Harryy.",Peter spluttered out

That got everyone's attention, even Remus. Remus politely bid Roseline goodbye and came closer to understand what has happened to make Peter so panicky. And why was Harry not with him?

"Where is she?", James asked with worry tinting his voice

"She...I started to talking to Amy and when I turned around Harry wasn't there on her seat. Burke told me she had gone to the washroom, so I waited. When after few minutes she didn't come back, I went to check. She was not there. I have searched every shop here. She is *nowhere*.", Peter wailed

"***WHAT DO YOU MEAN?***", James said with rising temper and pitch.

Sirius shared a look with Remus. They haven't seen James this angry before. Smoke was practically coming out of his ears and Peter was right in his attack zone. James wouldn't care if it was Peter, if Harry was hurt or kidnapped or... . Sirius did *not* want to finish that sentence ever.

"James, calm down.", Remus said softly trying to rein in our reindeer.

"Don't you ***dare*** tell me to calm down! You...Peter, *HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND*?", James yelled

Uh-No! James calling Marauders by their actual First name was a dangerous sign. Sirius realized the danger quickly as did Remus. They had to redirect James's anger or James would end up doing something he would regret later. Peter was sweating bullets in his ridiculous long fashioned shirts. It was bloody hot today but apparently some girl had told him he looks good in long shirts. So Peter, like a mindless followers, had started to exclusively wear long sleeves. Sirius shook

his head to get back to topic.

"How could you let your guard down? I *specifically* told you to keep an eye on her! She was covered in blood and was fighting for her life for days, when we met her for the first time! She was hunted by the worst of our kind. Did you think that just because some time has gone by, Harry was no longer *hunted*? ARE. YOU. KIDDING. ME ?", James thundered

"There is no point in going off your rockers, Prongs. Lets try to find her before we tell your parents that we lost their favorite child.", Sirius said in rising panic .

Sirius's heart was beating wilding. Remus started to sniff, pretty visibly. If it was any other situation Sirius would have laughed but right now, James and Sirius ran to search for Harry. Sirius saw Lily pair up with Alice to help search as well. They all started to run in different directions trying to find Harry. Sirius after some time stopped abruptly and James collided in him, tumbling both of them down.

"Padfoot, what is the matter with you? Why did you stop?!?", James grumbled as he got up and gawked at the scene in front of them.

Harry was sitting at same spot where they had left her and she was eating a sundae. Lily and rest of the gang came in time to see a surprised Harry shriek at being tackled into a hug by a relieved James. They both fell on floor but James had maneuvered them so he absorbed the impact.

"God, Jamie! What is the matter? Are you hurt? Is there an attack? What.."

Harry's panicky questions got muffled as James hugged her tightly again.

"You okay? Are *you* hurt?", James asked worried as they both got up from ground

"No, just surprised. Wasn't expecting a bear attack.", Harry said in confusion as James fussed around her.

James smacked her arm in annoyance.

"*Aw*, hey! What is that for?", Harry complained

"*Where* were you?", James asked in anger, which only Harry could rise in him

"To get sundaes.", Harry said as it should have been obvious.

In hindsight it was since she was eating it before being tackled to ground. But in their defense, they were all just very terrified and scared that something had happened to her. So to not see her bleeding or injured was a huge sign of relief, which of course was shown by physical sibling version violence. Sirius knew only a sibling can cause this level of anger and love. It was honestly very harmful for a person's emotional balance to have siblings.

"I told Peter. I even got his favorite one but then he was gone when I came back. I assumed he went to get you or something.", Harry said as she massaged her arms, still looking adorably confused

Sirius hugged her once to ensure himself that she was alive, well and safe. He asked Harry with his eyes if she really was okay. Harry smiled and nodded in affirmation. He moved back only to face with teasing smile for the remaining three girls. Sirius rolled his eyes. He knew he was in for a lot of teasing this year. He found he didn't mind it that much. He grinned back at the girls and winked as he pulled Harry closer to him. Harry looked at him in question, even if their a beautiful red tinge coloring her. Sirius couldn't help but stare in wonder at Harry. She was just so pretty. The girls giggle broke their staring.

Harry shoved him away playfully and went to hug Mary and Alice. He knew he was grinning like a fool but Harry made him happy. So he just rolled his eyes and dug into her sundae.

Harry froze as she saw Lily. Her eyes got a bit misty. Lily cleared her throat and introduced herself a bit awkwardly. James and Lily's children would have the worst flirting skills in generations.

Harry welcomed Lily, "Ah, I finally get to meet you. I have heard so much about you.."

James started to shake his head vigorously in negative as rest of them muffled their laughter.

".. from Mary and Alice", Harry said in end smiling mischievously.

Everyone laughed. Lily chuckled and the ice broke between them.

Peter, who was stewing in the corner, said suddenly," But you weren't here! I *checked* everywhere! Where did you go off too?"

"I was inside the Ice cream shop. Mr. Fortescue was kind enough to let me wait inside as there was this reporter who was bugging me.", Harry said annoyed

"Who was it?', Sirius inquired

"Skeeter someone.", Harry said as she sat beside Sirius

"Ugh.. that bitch! Don't say anything to her Harry, she is a gossip columnist. Twists every word you say into a rumor.", Mary said disgusted.

Harry nodded as she swatted both James and Sirius away from her sundae, unsuccessfully. Remus tried to shoo Sirius away from finishing Harry's sundae, which lead to a very intense napkin slap fight, much to amusement of Harry.

"Is your special mission over then, Jamie? I was thinking of visiting the broom shop before leaving.", Harry asked with a smile.

"Ugh, ya. We still have time before we need to leave. Ice Creams everyone?", James asked the group enthusiastically

Everyone nodded and grabbed a table. Marauders went to get ice creams for everyone.

Sirius came back to see Reg sitting next to Harry with the group and chatting amicably. Sirius felt hope that if Reg would just become friends with other side then, maybe, he will see what a narrow and dangerous mindset their family had. Who knows, maybe Reg will join him in fighting the bad, evil and idiots of the world.

A man can hope, can't he?

"Did I die?", Sirius joked as he pushed Reg off the seat next to Harry and settled there.

"Unfortunately, world hasn't been blessed with that yet.", Reg joked as he sat on next chair and stole Sirius's ice cream.

Sirius whined at his tasty treat getting eaten by the hungry Hippogriff beside him. Everyone laughed, except Harry. Sirius had noticed that whenever they would joke about death or dying, Harry's eyes would

get clouded and she would zone out.

Lily, who had noticed it as well, asked with fake enthusiasm," So what all subjects are you taking Harry?"

Harry came back to real world with a start and said with flush at being caught," Transfiguration, DADA, Charms, Herbology, Care of magical animal and Potions. Lord only know how I managed to get an O in Potions. I am a disaster in it."

"Its in the blood. You are good, your concepts were just not clear.", James said with an encouraging smile as he stole a bite off Harry's ice cream.

"So Harry, what are you most excited about?', Lily asked curiously breaking stare off between the sibling, who were on verge of getting into a napkin fight.

"Oh, to see these two in a Quidditch match. I have heard so many stories that now I am just very curious to experience it.", Harry said with an excited smile

"Well, you would certainly enjoy it when we play together in the team.", James said as if it was a fact

"Jamie, just because you are the Quidditch Captain doesn't mean you will take me in the team. There might be someone better and yon cant play favoritism while creating a team. Team suffers because of nepotism.", Harry said annoyed as if they have been having this arguments for a very long time.

"You are way better than them, sis. I have no doubt about it. I have played with most of them since I can remember. No one comes even close to your level of skills. You wait and see.", James said confidently.

Harry opened her mouth to argue again when Mary changed the topic.

"So I heard, you are already off the market. Uranus was awfully bummed by that news.", Mary crackled.

"I have to Sirius, this was fast but not surprising. You two make such a cute couple!", Alice said dreamily.

Sirius face colored a bit and before he could say something, Harry said with a shy smile," What can I say its hard to resist his charisma."

Sirius felt something fluttering in his stomach. His eyes clashed with Harry and time stood still.

"Its the innocence of not knowing.", James said seriously

"I miss that innocence. Alas, its too late for us but maybe she can come out of unscathed.", Remus said sarcastically as he smacked Sirius's back

The pull was broken. Sirius rolled his eyes at Remus as he pulled Harry's palm up. He kissed top of her palm as he stared deep into her eyes. Harry had a tinge of blush coloring her cheeks making his stomach do somersaults.

"So what all did you do this summer?", James asked in the charged atmosphere as he pinched Sirius to cool it.

Sirius sat up straight but kept hold of Harry's hand under the table. They all started to tell their summer stories, while pulling each other legs. It was nice to see Reg relax and get involved in the conversation as a regular 15 year old, instead of the 90 year grump Reg kept trying to be. Sirius and Harry continued to hold hands through it all. It was one of the best outings they have had in recent times.

Marauders decided that after dropping Lily to her parents, they would go stare at the new Nimbus for some time before leaving. Sirius noticed a burn on Harry's hand. It looked new and painful. He secretly pointed it to James.

"WHAT HAPPENED?', James turning into Medic/angry grandma.

James looked ready to kill someone. Harry lovingly ran her finger through the anger Stag's hair to calm him down.

"You remember that curse Physicians were unable to identify. Yeah..", Harry said sheepishly as if embarrassed that a dark curse has started to hurt her again.

James eyes moistened as he moved his hand lightly on the skin. Harry winced, so did Sirius and James. Remus took out Burn-Healing Paste from somewhere and gave it Harry. James applied it as gently as he could. Sirius noticed Reg's eyes brim with tears. Hope flared in his chest. Maybe all was not lost yet. Lily silently pursued the entire scene. Her stance and expression was becoming more protective for Harry as time went on. Sirius grinned. No, not all was lost. They have gained have something invaluable today.

Chapter 9

"Will you just tell her, I am *not* obsessed with Potter?', Lily grumbled to Alice

Alice giggled and said sarcastically, "Come on Mary! Just because Lily knows where James is every moment of the day, doesn't mean she is obsessed with him!"

Lily said defensively, "I soo do *not*!"

"You sooo do!", Mary riled Lily

"Nuh-huh!", Lily said childishly

Mary just hummed playfully. Lily huffed in exasperation.

Lily needed to stop this nonsense of *Lily Evans* having a *crush* on *James Potter*.

There was no crush. Lily just didn't have the urge to jinx James every time she sees him now. Sometimes she gets this uncontrollable urge to pinch his cheeks when he is being too cute or sweet. Or hose down girls lusting after him as if he was some kind of meat, delicious rugged meat, but meat nonetheless.

"Mary wanted to check with Potter about Quidditch whatever. So I being a good friend of *Mary*, told her where James might be!", Lily defended passionately

"I thought he was in Library but of course, Lily corrected me. He is on the Quidditch field.", May said mischievously

"Oh...is he having a secret rendezvous? Quidditch Pitch is excellent spot for it." Marlena said rogushly

"Ooo...is it Emily?", Alice inquired curiously

Lily was *not* annoyed that James might be spending time with Pretty, brilliant, badarse and smart Ravenclaw Chaser. Perfect Emily, who could fly the broom as if she was born on it, with her perfect blue eyes and blinding smile. She had been one of the toughest rivals James had in his Quidditch career. So obviously, James wouldn't shut up about Emily. James's eyes have started to lit up whenever Emily was around nowadays. Lily would get nauseated and there was this roar in her

blood whenever she noticed it.

Despite knowing that James wasn't rendezvousing with Emily right now, she was still disgruntled and annoyed.

Mary said with evil grin, "He could definitely be meeting Emily. Did you see how he loooong he spoke with her once he figured out that both of them would be rival Quidditch Captains."

"I think he has found his soulmate", Marlena said teasingly

"Frank told me, Emily had agreed to go out on a date with James in upcoming Hogsmeade outing, if James wins.", Alice added giving Lily a pity look

Lily felt something stir in her at idea of them together. Happy and in love. Lily almost hurled her breakfast out. Lily was willing to admit to herself at least that she was jealous of how easy it was for Emily to strike a conversation with James. How they were both perfect couple. James and Lily always ended up fighting, didn't matter the topic. Lily felt a little disheartened by that

"Maybe they decided that that bet wasn't needed? I mean James can be charming when he needs to. ", Mary said as she stretched lazily

"What do you mean?", Lily asked too quickly.

All three looked at her knowingly as Lily flushed.

"It could be. Sirius is here.", Marlena said as she pointed at the ridiculously handsome young man reading a letter with utmost attention.

Lily noticed that Sirius was reading a letter addressed to James. She shrugged. These two were impossibly close. Lily was sure James wouldn't bat an eye if he found Sirius reading James's letter. James would probably end up thanking Sirius for reducing effort to read.

"True, Sirius won't leave James alone otherwise. They were both joined at the hips as it is.", Alice justified their ridiculous attempt at forming a scenario that wasn't happening.

Lily was going to let it. Honest. But she just couldn't help herself. She knew the answer, she had to say it.

She muttered defeatedly, "He is polishing his broom."

"Of course, she knows!", Alice howled.

"I *only* knew because Harry was going there to do the same! I swear these two are twins!", Lily said petulantly seeing the amusement on her friends face.

"Uh-huh.", Marlena hummed

"Stop humming.", Lily said to Marlena annoyed

"How did you know James had a detention yesterday when even Remus didn't know?", Mary asked conspiratorially

"I...I...", Lily flattered as all three girls started to laugh

It had almost become like a second nature to know where Potter was at all times. It was essential to avoid his ridiculous advances as much as possible. But now with James standing true to his words of being just friends, Lily doesn't know where she stands with him.

There is a whole new side to him that everyone knew, except her. James Potter who was funny, sweet, a proper gentleman and fiercely protective of anyone he cared about. Maybe it was coming out more now with Harry's presence. But Lily's thoughts about him and regarding him have changed so much in such short period of time, that it was laughable.

"Shut up! I don't even know why I talk to you idiots.", Lily grumbled as she got up to meet Harry.

"Say Hi to James!", Mary teased Lily as Lily huffed and left

Lily wasn't obsessed with James. She *wasn't*. She was ... intrigued. Potter she knew was obnoxious, self obsessed and just plain annoying. His audacity to assume that Lily would go out with him because he said so, ticked her off so much. But.. even then, she trusted him to do the right thing. Maybe not when it came to Snape. But then there was no love lost on both ends.

James had defended and vouched for Sirius since first day in Hogwarts, irrespective of who was against Sirius. James didn't care. He fought against bloodist vehemently and loudly since Lily can remember. James had punished Severus for calling Mudblood. Given James's methods were questionable but his intent was never in doubt. Lily is sure Marauders have also found a way to help Remus during his episodes. They were all kind, helpful and ridiculously intelligent, Lily

would be shocked if they hadn't.

After Harry came, Lily realized how much of that boastfulness and childishness was a screen guard to keep outsiders in the dark. Harry brought a very different side in all of them. Remus took it personally to make sure Harry was up to speed with all subjects, no matter if he was drowning in his workload. He didn't care. He would sit with her till she got the concepts and practical aspects of magic right.

James was always hovering near Harry. If Harry flinched James would be there to make it right. He would push her to do new things. Make new friends. Have new experiences. James was adamant that he would fill her memories with so many good ones that bad ones will have to fight to get any space. They both bonded over quidditch like crazy. It was insane how alike these two were. It was a wonder they weren't twins.

Sirius had a dramatic change in his behavior. Sirius was still flirty, charming and carried his lazy grace but it was different than before. He cared about Harry but in his own way. He wouldn't hover or fuss about her. He would let her know that he was there for her, whatever she needed. Dates. Fun. Kidnapping. Murder. Hiding a dead body. He was there for it all. He trusted her to handle the situation but he was always there when needed.

Sirius has started to wear a hairband on his wrist because it annoyed Harry *once* that she forget hers back in the room. He starts the day gifting Harry a flower and ends the day by kissing her forehead. They were so ridiculously cute.

They were both courting. She found is so unsettling that at 16, they were basically agreeing to marry each other. But as James explained, it was more of an old custom. Lily was surprised how calm was James about Harry potentially marrying Sirius. James's overprotective had gotten the sibling into screaming contest more than once. Sirius would always calm the Potters down and discuss rationally. (See, if Sirius Black being the calm, stable voice in any scenario was not something that she would have imagined even last year)

Peter relationship with Harry was non-existent from what Lily had observed. Harry maintained a respectable distance but ignore his existence as much as she could. Lily had noticed Harry balling her palms, sometimes when Peter talked. It was very different from how she interacted with the rest, including Snape (who was nasty even on his best days). Everyone ignored it.

Harry had managed to make friends across houses very quickly. She didn't discriminate people based on their houses or status but on them purely, baring Peter that is. Everyone respected that. It was a rare quality to have. She had seen even Slytherins listen to her whenever she spoke. Gryffindor's were on her side the moment she got selected in the Quidditch team.

Harry was flying on the Quidditch Pitch. It is the only time when Lily has seen Harry at happiest. It was like the higher she flew, more her burden fell away. She was going to give Lily a heart condition with the stunts she pulled. Lily sat on the stand and started to read for the next class.

Lily took her wand out when she heard Harry shriek. Only to see James hug the life out of Harry while they were floating 50 feet up in the air. These Potters would make her age faster than the potions can heal her.

"Let them be.", a charming, aristocratic voice said from the side as he lowered her wand.

Lily eyes met grey sparkling eyes. She raised her eyebrows waiting for explanation

"My love had guilted Prongs's parents into getting a full body checkup. It turned out they both had early stage Dragon Pox. Had it been left undetected even for next few weeks, saving them would have been difficult. But now with few doses of Uncle Monty's own creation, they would both be good as new."

Sirius explained as he smiled happily at the two cousins showcasing their happiness by challenging each other to ridiculous daring chases. Sirius and Lily fell in companionable silence as they watched the two Potter laugh in pure joy.

Potters flew towards them with blinding smile.

"You are both crazy!", Lily said fighting a smile

"You have no idea.", Sirius said mesmerized

Lily bit her lips as she tried to stop squealing in delight at the look these two idiotic love birds were sharing. Sirius looked as if he has never seen anything as celestial as Harry and Harry gazed at Sirius as if she couldn't believe he was real.

"ITS WAS FANTASTIC!", James yell broke the charm they both were in.

"It really is.", Lily said teasingly as Harry and Sirius flushed.

"So how was the date?", Lily asked the trio to change the topic

"Oh brilliant! We went Bowling. I won. ", James grinned

"Once in six rounds.", Harry said with roll of eyes

"So? My sentence was factually correct. ", James said smugly

"Yeah Future Lady Black. How dare you accuse my hart of such deceit? You know he is too simple minded for that.", Sirius said with straight face.

James smacked Sirius while Harry laughed. Lily wasn't even surprised that James went on their Date and considered it as a trio date. Lily suspects neither of them would have it any other way.

"Wait...muggle bowling?", Lily asked in surprise

Sirius helped Harry descend from the broom. His hand were on Harry's waist as they both had some whispered conversation, which left Harry with a beaming smile.

Meanwhile James jumped off his broom to land right in front of Lily. He ruffled his air swept hair. Lily was speechless for a while. James looked so handsome. His boyish smile, sparkling warm eyes and ridiculous fit body made Lily gulp visibly.

"What other type of bowling is there?", James said lazily

He slumped on seat next to her and stared at the clouds. Lily shook her head to stop staring at James. Lily started to blush when Harry gave her a knowing look.

"So, I think we will be late for Slughorn's class.", Lily said loudly to clear her rapidly beating heart.

Harry coughed to cover her amusement.

"Clearly. It will take us all of 20mins to reach the classroom.", Harry said evenly, even if her eyes were twinkling like mad.

They started to walk towards class in comfortable silence.

"Umm.. don't you guys want to get your stuff for class?", Lily reminded them in concern

"Why worry when you have Moony.", James said wide grin as they saw a grumpy Remus waiting for the quarter in front of class.

"Love you, Moony.", James said with a flirty grin as he took his stuff from Remus.

When Remus's grumpiness didn't reduce, Sirius smacked a wet kiss on his cheek.

"Bugger off, you wankers. Where were you all this early in the morning? No note! Nothing! Just empty beds and no explanation! ", Remus complained like a tired mother

"Hey, I left note with Wormtail when you were snoring worse than a dragon.", Sirius said in defense

"Wormtail, ran before I woke up.", Remus shot back

Harry head shot up at that information. Her expression cleared and eyes hardened.

"Your snores must have scared him. Anyways, you needed your beauty sleep", Sirius said flirty

"Oh, shut it..", Remus said ready to explode

"Moony, I am in a really bad place right now.", Sirius said grimly

Harry looked at him concerned as Remus's glare intensified. James leaned against the wall with a broad smile.

"Not mentally, I'm just standing next to Snape.", Sirius said as if declaring death of a closest friend

Snape, who had just come near Sirius, got startled. His befuddled expression was just so funny. Remus fought a smile as Harry looked away to hide her laugh. Lily bit her lips hard but then her eyes met James and they both burst out laughing., others following the suit.

It was at this time that Slughorn opened the door and they all started to pile in for the class. She didn't miss hurt look of Severus but she was way past that now. She did overhear what Sirius whispered to Harry, which left Harry stumped and a blushing bride.

"I think I have found purpose of my life. To make you laugh. You look eternal when you laugh."

Chapter 10

"Potterrrr"

Lily rubbed her eyes to ascertain that she was indeed seeing what she was seeing. Carrow twins, Dolohov and Lestrange were all standing in strange positions against the corridor wall. It reminded her of those models in Petunia's magazines posing as dead bodies for some reason. Why were these four leaning against the wall and looking mildly constipated?

Lily looked at Harry in confusion, maybe Harry has figured out why their fellow Slytherins were acting so oddly. Harry, who was looking at the scene pensively, took one look at Lily's incredulous and confused look and snorted.

"They are trying to be *intimidating*, Lily.", Harry playfully answered Lily's unsaid query

"Like *that*?", Lily asked incredulously

"Hmmm...I think they might have seen some really bad muggle movies to get inspired.", Harry said conspiratorially

"We would never watch *Muggle* movie, you blood traitor.", Dolohov drawled sinisterly.

All four jerked back to normal human standing position and scowled. Now they just looked constipated with a rod up their arse but given this was there usual go to look, Lily felt at ease.

"Ah, now I recognize them.", Lily said sarcastically, even as she readied for the inevitable attack.

There was no way they were waiting for Harry in that ridiculous position for a polite meet and greet. This was going to be an attack and an intense one for sure.

"Shut up, *Mudblood*!", Lestrange said nastily.

Lily felt grim. Dolohov and Lestrange were known for their magical strength and cruelty. It would start a war because Marauders would make life of every Slytherin a living hell for daring to attack and harm Harry. Lily suspected her house and several others would not object if this were to happen.

"This is the first time I have seen someone shut themselves up. On purpose and out loud for the world to hear.", Harry said in surprise

Everyone looked at Harry, wondering if she has lost her marbles. Lily caught the mischievous glint in Harry's eyes that were so like James. Lily barely managed to contain her giggle.

"Good job, Lestrange. More people should take lead to shut themselves up out loud before being mocked by others.", Harry praised the baffled Lestrange

"I am talking to this filth!", Lestrange angrily pointing at Lily

Except a mirror had appeared out of nowhere, so Lestrange was pointing at himself. Lily laughter burst out of her.

"I applaud your self awareness, if only more people were this touched with their inner self.", Harry said with encouraging smile as her eyes danced in mirth at gobsmacked expression of their attackers.

"I think he is just touched.", Lily whispered slyly.

Harry nodded solemnly as her eyes twinkled at Lily's comment.

"You Witch!", Lestrange managed to spat with the foam coming out of his mouth in anger.

"Ah! Good, good! Acknowledging others is also a important step towards self improvement. ", Harry said cheerfully.

"I don't have time for this!", Lestrange said as he stomped like a nine year old

"I respect your need for boundaries and will take your leave. Thanks for sharing with us your journey towards self improvement.", Harry said formally as she took Lily's hand and turned around.

Lily wondered if Harry had managed to diffuse the situation by baffling Slytherins. Of course, life was never hunky dory like that. Screams of pain and horror came from behind them.

Harry snickered and turned around proudly to look at her artwork. It was like a Renaissance painting of blood and gory of grotesque people. Lestrange had a huge cut going from his shoulder to torso. Carrows had cuts all over their body while Dolohov seemed to have broken his legs. They were all groaning and moaning. Lily had no clue

when Harry had created a defensive block behind them. Harry, indeed, was a Defense Protégé.

"Did you really think, *you* gits could scare me? I have been tortured by Voldemort himself, you dungheads.", Harry said dismissively as she examined the damage.

All of them flinched hearing Voldemort's name. Harry rolled her eyes and snorted.

"You can't even hear his name. Its a made up silly name of a teenage boy. Tell *Voldemort,* I said hi and to fuck off.", Harry said with a wide grin as she poked at a gash in Lestrange head, making him scream in pain.

Harry made Lily ponder her own fear of Death Eater and Vol.. Voldemort. Harry was right, it is a made up and quite silly if she was being honest. If Lily were to defend against that Lord and his minions, then she had to be brave enough to say his name and fight him when time comes. Harry was right, it was just a name. The ambiguity gave it power and terror.

"Alright fellas, sleep tight.", saying so Harry cast a spell and all four fell in deep sleep.

Their foreheads were graced with huge pimples spelling TWIT and their color turned to red color.

"I think the hair color suits them.", Harry said happily

"It does give their bodies a lived in look.", Lily joked

"Well, this was entertaining but the essay is not going to write itself. Lets go!", Harry said cheerfully as she dragged Lily away from the sleeping Cinderella quarter.

"Hi sister, where have you been?", James asked cheerfully as he pulled chairs for both of them.

"My love, how you have abandoned me? Do you know the tortures I had to suffer? I had to *sit* and suffer through 40 mins of Remus prattling on and on about how *History* is important.", Sirius said petulantly

"We have been here for 5 mins Padfoot!", Remus said spluttered

"Ahhh... I knew it!", Sirius said dramatically

"Moony can slow down time!", James said theatrically without missing a beat

"That is the only explanation on how he has time for lecturing, studying, sleeping. All the while mooning over Roseline.", Sirius added seriously

"I will not be pulled into another ridiculous conversation!", Remus said dismissively as he flicked Sirius on forehead.

"Ridiculous? You call our very engrossing and mind boggling discussions, *ridiculous*?", James asked 'indignantly'

"Debating whether Vampire's would be more comfortable on moon than werewolves for 2 hours is more than enough ridiculous debate for one day.", Remus said haughtly with pose and everything.

"But you have the power of infinite time!", James said dramatically

"And I should my power to discuss *this?*", Remus asked incredulously

"True true, we should use it for far more important tasks.", Sirius mused

"You should increase our bedtime!", James said eagerly

"So that Sirius can complete his beauty sleep.", Peter joined in with higher than normal voice.

Everyone laughed as Sirius flicked Peter's nose in retaliation. Peter swatted his hand away. Harry stiffened as her eyes zeroed on Peter's arm. Harry face became devoid of emotions as her usually very expressive eyes became opaque.

Lily has noticed at times when Harry would get this look on her face. If Lily was being honest, that Harry scared her. That look made Harry seem like a cold, calculating and ruthless person instead of the warm, caring and cheerful person she was.

Lily had first noticed it in the first Care of magical creatures class. After seeing Nifflers, Harry had a very different reaction than others. Where others were cooing and just having a fun time with Nifflers, Harry started to ask their Professor some very pointed questions. Almost like she was finalizing a mission where Nifflers could be

useful. Lily had felt a bit unsettled then. She had noticed Marauders watching Harry with a frown. Harry had dismissed their concerns saying they were seeing things.

Lily hadn't failed to notice that she hadn't denied the claims of going on missions. Lily had pushed it to back of her mind. Harry was too young and had suffered too much to be involved in anything dangerous any more. Potters would never allow it.

"What are you all doing here? I thought you guys finished all work last night?", Lily asked the Marauders to get Harry out her serious zone

"Oh we did! We don't come to library to study Lily!", Sirius drawled as he corrected Harry's essay.

"We are looking for a new prank.", James explained with enthusiastic head nodding.

James was just so cute. Lily had this sudden urge to pinch James's cheeks. Lily stopped her thinking track. She will never hear the end of it from the girls.

"We want to do something low-key but annoying.", Peter said with a smile.

"Because *someone* had overridden an excellent suggestion of turning all Slytherins into Hamsters.", Sirius said as he pointed at Remus.

"We don't have to go grand all the time. Its just a month since the start of the year. We can do low-key this time.", Remus defended himself

"Sometimes small things annoy you more than large thing because you never expect it.", Harry said softly as she opened her books to start the essay.

"I know! My neighbor was learning to play bagpipe this summer. The only thing he learned was how to annoy the whole neighborhood.", Lily grumbled.

"Wait, Lily. You are genius! I want to learn to play bagpipe!", James said excitedly

"Why?", Lily asked suspiciously

"I am going play it near Dungeons to annoy Slytherins during nap time.", James said with glee

"You dont need to learn to play it then.", Harry said with a smirk

"Oh, you are brilliant, my wonderful sister.", James said excitedly as he kissed Harry on checks.

James dragged all the Marauders out to get bagpipes and play the best noise Hogwarts has ever suffered through. Remus groaned but followed an excited Peter and James out. Sirius kissed Harry on forehead in farewell and left. Harry had a slight blush on her face.

Lily grinned knowingly at Harry, who shoved her playfully in response.

"Seriously, Harry.", Lily half-heartedly admonished her

"Its sending a bubble at Slytherins versus the tank they would have sent, Lily.", Harry said with a small smile as she picked her essay that Sirius had corrected.

Lily snorted and went back to her pending work. Sixth year was kicking everyone's arse with a swagger. Despite Sirius's claim of not coming to library to study, this year has forced even them to spend hours studying in library to keep up. Lily had a strong suspicion that the reason Marauders were so frequently haunting the library this year was because Harry preferred to study here than in Common room. Remus was more than happy with the development.

The girls met the Marauders in front of the Charms class which they had with Slytherins after some time. Lily choked back a laugh as she saw the Cinderella quarter standing there regally with TWIT on their forehead. It was ridiculously comical. Harry nodded at them in acknowledgement, making them flinch and shuffle nervously before they caught hold of themselves.

"Ah! Brilliant, brilliant! You all look absolutely stunning!.", Sirius said mockingly

"I knew you discover sooner or later your true self!", James said gleefully

" I have to appreciate the ease with which you carry your 'Twit' crown. ", Remus added sarcastically

"I have to say the hair color is inspirational!", Sirius taunted.

"Definitely brings out your eyes, Lestrange.", James goaded Lestrange.

The Cinderella quarter pretended to not hear anything once they saw Harry grinning wickedly as she spun her wand in her hands. Lily grinned seeing the terror Harry had installed in these low level Slytherin with a single encounter. Remus was staring at Harry in suspicion.

"They attacked you?", Remus deduced.

James and Sirius went ramrod straight and looked murderous. All their earlier gleefulness had disappeared.

"I think they have learned their lesson!", Harry said firmly

"You don't know them, Harry. They can never learn!", James said with hatred.

"Its a side effect of having dung as brain.", Sirius added grimly.

"I am sure they would never *itch* to act in an uncivilized manner again.", Harry said with mischievous smile.

Marauders beamed in pride at Harry. Although Lily got a feeling Peter was not too into it for some reason.

"No, revenge James! I mean it.", Harry said strictly

James refused to promise anything. Harry sighed as ran her fingers through her hair as if brushing some disturbing thought away.

"James, you need to let this go.", Harry said quietly

"Why?", James asked seriously

"Because I need to *know* that I *can* take of myself out there.", Harry said defeatedly .

"Of course, you can. Our ... defending doesn't mean you can't!", Sirius said softly while drawing circles on Harry's hand.

"I know that.. but I... the moment I feel I am in over my head, I will tell you. But if I can defend myself, you need to let it be. I need to assure myself that I am capable.", Harry requested

"You are the most capable person I know, Harry. If this is what you need, then this is what you will get. I will leave them.", James assured her gently

Lily was left reeling in surprise and some other emotion she refused to investigate what it was. She absolutely adored this side of James. Lily was sure that James's protective side must have been rearing to tear the Slytherins limb from limb for daring to attack his sister but James had agreed not to because Harry needed it to be confident in her abilities. James would give up his need to ensure Harry's needs were met made Lily almost give James a hug. In public. In front of everyone.

This was a dangerous territory Lily was finding herself frequently in.

"They would just get bagpipes played more loudly than others.", Sirius joked as he side hugged Harry.

"Like whole night.", James added with a tight smile

"I was going to suggest, Moaning Myrtle's singing instead.", Remus said with a evil smile

Lily burst out laughing seeing the panic which enveloped the Slytherins when the Marauders all turned to stare at them together while smiling evilly.

Chapter 11

Peter wanted to sing and dance around a bit. Tonight would be a fantastic night. It was full moon night, which meant exploration, excitement and adventure. Peter was sure tonight it would be like old days. When it was just the boys. No girls, no sisters. Just pure fun and rowdiness. Peter had no doubt James and Sirius would convince Remus to leave the Tree. Moony hated being trapped in that horrible place and Remus was too afraid of being dumped by his friends to ever go against them.

Peter missed his friends and the fun they had pulling massive pranks. He has started to feel so neglected and alone these days. It was not that they were shunning his company or were not as close they used to be. It was just the others had such less time to spare for shenanigans, what with their advanced NEWTS coursework, girls and Quidditch. It barely left anytime for sleep, let alone listen to him whine and complain about his issues. Peter was never comfortable alone with his thoughts. Marauders pranks and shenanigans had been excellent distraction in past.

Today would be good night, Peter reminded himself strongly.

Like old times. Just them against the world.

Full moons were the only time when Peter felt at par with his too brilliantly gifted and talented friends. He scowled as the rain started to pour down heavily and he caught his reflection in the mirror.

Peter has always been on the heavier side. His friends had gotten hotter and hotter while he was edging towards pudgy, unattractive side. Girls literally drooled when Sirius or James walked by them and made heart eyes when Remus sweetly helped them with their issues.

For girls, Peter might as be invisible. Peter was fun and a lot of things that girls didn't bother to find out. They had only to approach him and woo him to know how brilliant he was. But no, no girl wanted to put that much effort into it. No they just wanted tall, hot and handsome guys. Peter knew in comparison to his *friends* he didn't stand a chance with any girl. He was too average, too plain, too weak and funny looking for them to ever be interested. Remus biggest fear was that he would die alone. Peter knew in his bones that in reality Peter would be the one to die alone and lonely.

Peter grimaced and shook his head vigorously to pull himself out of spiral.

"Pettigrew"

Peter froze in his tracks. A silhouette of a tall bloke was walking slowly towards him.

Peter gulped and stepped back to increase space between the threatening figure advancing towards him. Peter tried to see if there was any escape. He couldn't find one, unless he was willing to out his Animagus secret.

Lightening flashed and Peter managed to swallow a scream that was waiting to burst out of him, when recognized who his 'attacker' was. Peter wished he could melt in the walls as Yaxley, the scowling seventh year Slytherin with long, pale tall blond hair tied in a neat braid, hulked towards him.

A lazy smile crept up Yaxley's face as he eyed Peter. Peter's heart was racing and his legs were shaking as he plastered himself as much into the wall while Yaxley continued to eat all the space between them. Wormtail was bleating furiously to rush to safety.

Yaxley's smile has always been unpleasant but the way Yaxley was looking at him, made Peter want to scurry away... fast. Peter almost whimpered in terror. Yaxley's eyes lit up as he smiled threateningly.

"Pettigrew.", Yaxley slurred as he pressed hard against Peter.

Peter felt claustrophobic and caged in. Peter skin started to crawl and bile rose fast in his mouth. Peter felt a strong revulsion spread through his body as Yaxley continued to stand unnaturally close to Peter. Peter didn't like the situation he was in but he was helpless to get out of it. Yaxley was playing some sort of mind game which Peter was too petrified to understand.

What was Yaxley doing?

"Yaxley.", Peter said breathily.

Yaxley sneered and roughly dragged Peter into a dark corner of the corridor. Yaxley caged him against a wall again. Peter squirmed as he tired to find some room to breath and not feel like he would be taken against his will.

Peter supposes this is his life now. To hide in dark and wait as all the fools who oppose Lord Voldemort succumbs to defeat. Peter knows who he is. He has no delusions about it.

When he saw Harry covered in blood and all that torture, he knew straight away that Dark Side will win. Sure, Light side would gallantly fight but can never win. Not when they fight with restrictions on their spells. Peter had reached out secretly to Malfoy during one of the Pure blood meetings. Sirius and James had been busy pranking someone or the other, Peter had lost interest.

Voldemort quickly realized that Peter presented a unique opportunity of being the perfect spy, who no one would ever suspect. Peter had milked it for all his worth. He wove a story to make Death Eaters sponsor a trip to Ireland where he was trained by some of the best. It was just unfortunate that his magic was not supporting him in becoming a legend.

Peter did ask his Lord to spare his friends. His Lord agreed having no interest in teenagers who held no real power, except Harry. If only Harry had inherited James's obliviousness, Peter would have gotten his golden ticket to luxurious life easily. But no, Peter had to work hard for each intel.

Peter would have handed Harry there and then to Voldemort, if that's what the Lord had desired. Harry was no one. Sure James seemed to have taken a shining at her but James took care of everyone who was not Slytherin. Peter dismissed the care. Peter was sure James will forgive Peter for handing over Harry if everyone else lived.

Lord Voldemort was obsessed with Harry to a point that it made *him* uncomfortable. Despite numerous attempts by Peter to befriend Harry or even tail her around, Peter had no gleamed any useful information. Everything he knows, everyone else does too. It made him less worthy in eyes of these haughty Death Eaters. Harry was not an easy person to know. She was always on guard when he was around, almost as if she knew his secret.

Harry, like all Potters, trusted their friends blindly and refused to except anything horrible about them. It would take Merlin himself to make James believe that Peter had already sold Marauders and rest away to get a cushiony life. There was no way James would accept even slightly that one of his closest friend was a spy for Lord Voldemort. Irrespective of how talented, powerful and dangerous James can be, James would never accept that one of his closest friend

could go to the dark side. Once James formed an opinion, it was near impossible to change it. And James always had a soft spot for Peter.

"Report.", Yaxley commanded

Peter gritted his teeth, "There is nothing new to report since yesterday. She is doing well in her class. She managed to get into Quidditch team. Although James would have taken her, even if didnt know how to fly. Her duel skills are getting famous in the circle, since her victims still wear her work."

"Do you think My Lord will be pleased with the information you have gathered these past few weeks?", Yaxley asked slowly.

Peter was sweating bullets and he felt goosebumps all over as he sensed imminent danger.

"Harry is secretive. She vanishes for hours every day. Never at same time. Never at same place. She knows more about the secrets of Hogwarts for a person who arrived a few weeks back.", Peter said desperately

"Yes, we have heard this theory several times now but there is nary a proof.", Yaxley said bored as he leaned even closer to Peter

"But... but...", Peter tired to find anything to get the hell out of this situation

"Do you think if Harry was hiding something Dark Lord will not have found it during the year she was under his torture?", Yaxley drawled.

Yes! Peter desperately wanted to shout out. If Peter could hide his Animagus truth from Dark Lord, Harry surely can. She was way more powerful and dangerous than anyone realized. Peter has seen the darkness in her which others refused to see. If Peter was to bet, Harry would be as dangerous an enemy to have as Voldemort.

"Find something useful soon. Or we will have to find something else for you.", Yaxley said eerily as he turned and left

Peter sagged against the wall for few minutes before gathering himself up to meet his assets. He rearranged his expression to cheerful. They all were gathered in common room doing their NEWTS subject homework.

"Guess who I bumped into on my way to get my glasses fixed?", James

asked the group at large suddenly

"Who?", Lily asked curiously

"Everyone.", James said with straight face

"I see.", Harry grinned

"I couldn't.", James said with a matching wide grin as everyone chuckled.

"So who took your glasses?" Mary asked intrigued

James playfully glared at Remus.

"Did Remus really take your glasses?", Mary asked in disbelief

Remus grinned back mischievously and winked at Mary

Marlena smacked Remus on his arms in appreciation and said, "Didn't know you had it in you! Brilliant!"

"We are corrupting him. Very slowly but surely.", Sirius said as proud mama as Remus blew raspberry at Sirius

"He was bugging me since he woke up at god awful 5AM.", Remus grumbled as he sipped his coffee.

"Quidditch season is starting and the first match is against the slimly gits.", James defended himself

"Oh is the timetable out already?", Mary asked suddenly interested

"Yeah, I have booked practice slots every morning.", James said with serious look

"Ah, does that mean I will have peaceful mornings everyday now?", Remus asked happily

"Good bye, beauty sleep.", Sirius added ruefully

Harry snorted. Sirius leaned on Harry's shoulder with puppy look. Harry grinned she ran her hand through his hair. Sirius leg was unconsciously tapping, much to amusement of Harry.

"Ah, my most esteemed and pretty beater, your sacrifice will be written in golden word. Legend will be formed.", James said

sarcastically, pulling Sirius away from Harry to him for a bone crushing hug.

"On other hand, I will get to see my lovely lady earlier every morning.", Sirius said with his panty dropping smirk as he winked at Harry while still getting his bone crushed by James.

Harry blushed deeply and James cleared his throat as if to warn Sirius to be mindful of his flirting. It was odd. If Sirius was courting Harry, then this has to be the most restrained and gentleman Sirius has ever been with any girl. Every time Sirius would flirt intensely or truthfully, James would get this uncomfortable look on his face. There was something fishy here.

"So Harry excited about your first Quidditch match?", Remus asked pleasantly

"I am. It should be a lot of fun.", Harry said excitedly

"After the way you left everyone spellbound, I am sure you would be brilliant.", James supported her proudly

"But Harry, you need to be careful. Gryffindor vs Slytherins gets very intense and violent. Even before the match. ", Lily frowned

"Ah, don't worry about it, my love. Her knight with glorious hair will be there to protect her from all harm.", Sirius said gallantly as he kissed Harry's hand.

Harry was wearing a lovely shade of red while giggling.

"And who save *you*?", Lily asked jokingly

"Me, who else will save his sorry arse.", James joked as he shoved Sirius playfully

"Ah! I am sorry, Sirius.", Lily said sadly

"What? Why?", Sirius asked perplexed

"With James as your Knight in shining amour, it is surely the last we would see of you.", Lily said dramatically as her eyes danced in mirth

James heart was in his eyes at being teased by love of his life, even if he acted as if someone had stabbed him in the back.

"Lily be a darling and remove your dagger from my back.", James said

matching Lily dramatic flair.

"Be gentle or he will bolt.", Remus added with a grin

"Like an antler startled. ", Sirius added in mock seriousness

"*Hey!* that happened once..."

Peter lost track of the conversation as he tried to form some plan of getting something useful back to Dark Lord and his supporters. He was *not* looking for another one on one with Yaxley. He missed a pair of green eyes trained on him.

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sirius yawned, unhinging his jaw wide enough that Hagrid could reside in it. What he needed was a good full body shake, Padfoot edition, to get some awareness in his bone tired body. He rubbed his eyes and a deep sigh, somehow, managed to escape him.

"I can't do this today.", Sirius grumbled

Sirius used the stairs sidehandle as life support to pull himself closer to his destination, Arithmancy class.

"Me either.", Quidditch captain mumbled sleepily beside him

Marauders hadn't slept a wink since yesterday morning because Gryffindor 's Quidditch Captain was a maniac. Only James Potter can rationalize that practicing like crazy at break of dawn was the best idea to beat Slytherins. The Quidditch team has been surviving on 4 hours sleeps for days now.

It was so exhausting that even Quidditch fanatic Harry had gone off an angry rant about not getting enough sleep because of the crazy Quidditch practice schedule. James, an ever concerned and overprotective on best days brother, had cancelled the practice for couple of days to let team rest.

Harry was the only person in world, apart from your dearest, that James would *consider* tweaking his Quidditch plans for. Sirius realized quickly that the only reason Harry had thrown a fit was to give some resting time to Marauders without arousing suspicion. After all, she knew what Marauders did during the Full Moon. She might not know the details but she knew enough.

James and Sirius managed to drag themselves to the classroom, a small miracle really. The Professor was taking her own sweet time, testing Sirius's will to get a decent education. Sirius cursed Peter, who was probably snoring like a Dragon right now. Peter had a free class and had happily departed for the bed after wolfing down all the food in sight.

James leaned heavily against the wall and promptly fell asleep. It was

testament to James's skill that 1. He was still upright sorta, no leaning alarming to one side and 2. Made it look awfullycomfortable.

Sirius decided to be more dignified and sit on the floor to sleep. He was not going to let this instance harm his persona of sauve, classy, hotness on legs.

Maybe he could lie down altogether. Or show his face in the class and then escape, feigning illness. Yes, he should do that.

A shadow fell over him, disturbing his amazing escape scenarios. Sirius barely managed to open his eyes to find Lily standing over them. Lily's eyes were pinched and lips pursed. Sirius yawned again. He did *not* have the energy to deal with another 'you need to be more responsible' lecture.

"Why don't you two skip this class?", Lily said in concern

James eyes snapped open and stood straight as if someone has rammed a rod up his arse without warning. Sirius supposes that even with warning, James would still react the same.

What were they talking about again?

James's glasses really magnify his eyes or did his eyes expand comically. Sirius noticed a fly try to crash land into the James's wide open mouth.

"Wh..what?", James spluttered

"Go to bed. I will take notes and make excuses.", Lily said slowly as if talking to Peter or Crabbe.

To be fair, their condition was worse than Peter's slowness. Between studies, prank planning and Quidditch practice, they have been running on fumes. A spectacular collapse was imminent.

"You... *you* are asking us to skip class?", James said slowly as if testing each word leaving his mouth

"Yes.", Lily said flatly.

"Huh..", James said intelligently

James stared at Lily with more comical expression, as if trying to figure out how to save his favorite chocolate from Moony. It was a futile task but a good brain exercise.

Sirius was never one to look too deeply when gift was given, jumped up and hugged her.

"I knew there was reason my soulmate is crazy about you. Be a darling and take notes."

Saying so Sirius grabbed a stunned James arm, leaving a very red Lily behind. Sirius would decipher the encounter later but right now, his bed was calling him.

James was unusually quite and thoughtful through their ginormous task of reaching bliss, aka his dorm bed. Sirius chalked James's odd behavior off to being bone dead tired. Now the only thing Sirius needed was an uninterrupted sleep for 10 hours and a hug from Harry. Sirius wondered if they should just use of the empty classroom to sleep but even that was too of an effort.

"She was concerned for me.", James said softly

"Who? Harry?", Sirius asked confused

"Lily.', James said in his same soft voice laced with wonder.

"She has always been a worry-wat. I blame Moony for it.", Sirius said as they entered an empty Gryffindor tower.

Sirius searched the common room, hoping to catch a glimpse of Harry. He hasn't been blessed with presence of his intended since last night. He was hoping Harry was here, reading a muggle novel in that ratty old jumper. Sirius loved snuggling with her as she got lost in the fictional world of muggle stories. There was a warmth and peace that swept through him whenever they snuggled. James found it most amusing. James credited his need to snuggle to Padfoot winning the race against his need to be sauve.

Sirius felt disappointed as an empty and chilly common room greeted him. Shrugging, he forced himself to climb the stairs instead of sleeping on the alluring armchairs in common room. Sirius stumbled as James suddenly pulled at his arm.

"Do you think she considers me as a friend now?", James asked tentatively.

Sirius took the glittery and nervous anticipation on his best mate's face. This was a stark difference to how James would have reacted last year had same situation occurred. There was no prancing, no

obnoxious celebration that Lily has finally deemed to declare, indirectly, that she cares about James Potter.

This James was nervous to believe that Lily could look at him in any other way than just as Harry's brother or a fellow human being. Not that Sirius would blame Lily. James became an idiot when he tried to woo his crush. Sirius was just surprised that James has finally realized it on his own.

"Yes, Prongs. She considers you a friend.", Sirius assured his suddenly insecure mate.

James's eyes grew huge and mouth popped open as he froze. James's eyes were having some serious exercise today. After some time, James's shoulders slacked in relief as if a burden has been removed from it.

"I never expected her to even talk to me politely. Let alone consider me a friend. ", James revealed as he nervously tugged his collar

Sirius raised an disbelieving eyebrow.

"I know what an arse I have been all these years. Plus what I did with Snape last year.... It was... downright horrid. I never expected her to move past that, you know.", James said with a relieved laugh

"Well now that you are her friend, it should be easy to accomplish your lifelong ambition of making her your life.", Sirius said enthusiastically

It was a little unsettling to see James be this mature about Lily. Where would Sirius get his daily entertainment quota if James became this level headed in love?

James shook his head slightly and started to move towards their room again.

"I am not going to put any moves on her. She has given me a chance to be a friend. I do not plan on losing that for anything.", James said with a casual shrug as they entered their peaceful and quite room

"You are really tired, aren't you?", Sirius tried to bring some lightness in the conversation.

James, this serious and calm headed, was a rarity. And in all prior occasions when James had been like this, all their lives had changed

irrevocably.

James would try to be normal and 'friend' with Lily for sake of not losing the 'friendship' but it was a useless endevour. They both were already too deep in it to get out, despite how obtuse both of them were acting.

"I am but I am happy to be in Lily's life in whichever form she deems me worthy. It might not be what I envisioned but it's better than a life without her.", James explained maturely

"That awfully mature of you.", Sirius said surprised

James flicked Sirius forehead playfully.

"I can be mature.", James said sticking his tongue out at Sirius

"Sure, darling.", Sirius said in good humor.

James pondered as he pursed his lips," Maybe I should see if what I feel for her is actually love or just my infatuation because she has always been so against me."

"Prongs?", Sirius asked concerned as James ran a hand through his head.

This was an interesting line of thought. James has always been so sure about everything that this speck of doubt was a bit jarring, to be honest.

James shook his head as he got up from his bed to change, "Let me figure it out. You would be the first to know."

Sirius nodded and let it be. Sirius prepared himself to handle the fallout from whatever crazy arse plans James was going to pull to figure his already figured out feelings for Lily. There was only so much you can save James from.

Idiots, both of them.

Sirius, on a whim, whipped out the Map to see where Harry is.

"Is she in library?", James muffled voice floated as he changed

"No...that's odd. I can't find her on the map.", Sirius frowned

"What? What do you you mean? Map has a glitch?", James asked in

concern as he walked over

"No, I don't think so.", Sirius said with pursed lips after performing some testing spells.

James and Sirius poured into the map, trying to find Harry. Map's magic was absolutely fine. There was no reason why they weren't able to locate Harry. It was almost like Hogwarts had swallowed Harry.

Where could she be?

"How is this possible?", James frowned as he muttered a complicated spell on the map

"How in the world is she in common room?", James said flabbergasted

"What?", Sirius asked in shock

"She is common room. ", James repeated perplexed

" Huh? But how?", Sirius asked puzzled

They trampled downstairs just as Harry lit the fire in the Common room. A shiver went down her spine as if she had dipped in cold water.

Harry turned around and asked in surprise," What are you two doing here? Didnt you have a class right now?"

They both continued to stare at her as a list of possibilities ran through his mind to find a reasonable explanation for why his intended seems to be able to apparate in Hogwarts.

"What is wrong?", Harry asked in concerned, when they continued to dumbly stare at her.

Harry's cheeks were flushed, hair in disarray and her eyes were sparkling. Her clothes were a bit rumpled. Sirius's emotions were on a roller coaster. Harry looked like she just had a shag, Sirius felt nauseated and had butterflies flutter simultaneously imagining Harry in that scenario. Sirius refused to see why he felt like ripping the unknown person to bits and pieces. Or why thought of him in that unknown person's place made him extremely hot.

"Where were you? ", James asked her curiously

"Who were you with?", Sirius asked jealously

Potters turned to him with incredulous expression.

"I was flying beyond the lake. Its sooo pretty and weather was so nice. For a change sun was out.", Harry said happily

"Okay but with who?", Sirius asked unsure if he wanted an answer to that question.

"Alone, who else?You both had classes.", Harry said as if it was an obvious answer.

Sirius felt himself defrost and walk towards Harry with slight spring in his heels.

"Are you two okay?", Harry asked in confusion after experiencing their volatile emotions.

"Bone tired.", Sirius said as he hugged/leaned on Harry

Harry stumbled a bit as she took Sirius weight. Sirius smiled as he felt at peace for first time today.

Sirius pulled back just as James closed the window and brought Harry's broomstick, lying near open window, towards them.

"Will my lady forgive this cad for not giving you flower in the morning?", Sirius pled playfully

"Ah, it did break my heart to not see your lovely face and a flower to match the loveliness in the morning.", Harry played along with battling eyelashes

"Ah, this brave gallant will strive to make up for the horrid act.", Sirius said with puppy face

Harry chuckled at the silliness and hugged him.

So, this is what Bliss feels like.

"If you guys are done interrogating, go back to bed. It looks like death paid a visit and decided to leave, seeing your condition.", Harry said jokingly as she hugged James tightly

James chuckled and lovingly said," Don't worry, sister dearest. I have skills to ensure no one can touch me."

"Uh Huh, and what skills will that be?", Harry asked jovially while

pushing them back towards their room

"Ability to bolt at lightest sound.", Sirius said stoically

Sirius ducked an incoming head slap from James as they entered their room.

"Where are Peter and Remus?", Harry asked casually

"Remus is still recovering from last night.", Sirius said as he pulled out his comfy night dress.

"And Peter is sleeping in his bed.", James said as he kissed Harry on her forehead before moving toward his bed

"Oh, are you guys planning a prank that involved invisibility?", Harry asked intrigued

"huh...no.", James replied unsure

"So, uh...why is Peter sleeping invisible?", Harry asked as she pointed towards Peter's empty bed

"He is not here.", James said with a frown

"Peter is missing out on sleep?", Sirius said incredulously

"Beats me.", James said slightly disturbed

"I am sure, he must just be around somewhere. Alright, I will leave you two to sleep. Love you.", Harry giving both of them flying kiss, left.

Sirius took the map out and started to search for Peter.

"There he is...with Yaxley.", James said calmly

There was something dangerous in the way James was looking at the Map. Like a calm before the storm.

There was no reason why Peter would meet Yaxley. Sirius and James stared at each other, trying to find a reason for *Peter* to skip sleep to meet Yaxley.

What was going on?

Chapter End Notes

Happy new year, y'all!

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

James said ominously, "The winds are shifting..."

"Yeah, it is getting colder." Peter interrupted

"No! ", James denied instinctively

Peter arched his eyebrow at James.

"I mean, yeah the winters are coming.", James floundered.

"I have to say Prongs, since you have stopped whining about Lily, your brain isn't braining as much.", Peter said sarcastically

"Did his brain ever brain though?", Remus said like the little shit he is.

"Oh! Shove it, you two! I obviously wasn't talking about that!", James said exasperated.

"Sorry for touching the nerve on such a sensitive topic", Peter smirked

"My brain is fine, thank you very much!", James grumbled

"Of course, dear. I am sure your brain is shooting rainbows.", Sirius said reassuringly

"Apologies, it must be painful to talk about something you don't have.", Remus grinned as James shoved them

"Dickheads! I wasn't talking about the weather!", James said petulantly

"Oh, so you were not being mysteriously about the weather? Shocking!", Sirius said lazily

"Well, duh!", James stomped his foot on the ground.

Sirius hummed and then showered unsuspecting Harry with flower petals.

Sirius smirked as girls' giggle filled the air. Everyone stopped to stare

at the flower filled lake with Harry in middle resembling a princess. Harry rolled her eyes at preening Sirius, even if she was smiling widely.

"Knew you had that romantic, lovesick streak in you, Padfoot.", Remus applauded sarcastically

"It can't be taught. ", Sirius accepted it proudly

"Absolutely, patheticness is god gifted and can't be taught. ", Remus joked and ducked Sirius's hex

"You think it would tat her leather jacket gift?", Peter asked curiously

"Ah, thanks for reminding me! I need to get her something delicious for my birthday.", Sirius said in a dreamy voice

Remus smacked Sirius when Sirius managed to duck James's head slap. James thanked Remus with a head nod.

"Leash your horny self!", James commanded.

"Oh, I could definitely leash myself. ", Sirius said with a roguish smile.

"*Ew..gross*!", James shuddered at the image that popped in his head

"Knew getting him that dog collar was a dangerous choice.", Remus said stoically as his eyes glittered in humor

"I will be very well behaved.", Sirius said raucously.

James smacked dreamy Sirius.

"I am going to enjoy seeing the bashing you would get from Harry.", James happily offered the suffering arsehole.

"I am sure *smacking* would be involved.", Sirius with devilish smile

James groaned in disgust as he sprayed Sirius mouth with water. This boy needed to be washed off his slutty thoughts.

"If it wasn't tatting her gift, why the sudden love?", Peter butted in, insistently.

"She was lost in her thoughts and they didn't seem to be good ones.", Sirius said with a shrug

James hummed in approval as they all sat comfortably in the Great Hall. James started to read news while boys dug into food.

"Who died?"

Remus question snapped James out of his thinking.

"What? No one. Why do you ask?", James asked befuddled

"You found a new Quidditch player to drool about then?", Remus as he peaked at the newspaper

"No, I don't drool... awake. Why are you asking these questions?", James asked with frown

"You have been staring at one spot in newspaper for past few minutes, Prongs.", Sirius pointed out

"I know your brain isnt braining but it cannot be that non-functional. ", Remus joked

"I...", James struggled to explain his line of thought, which was a first, since he spoke whatever came in his mind.

James had told Remus to his face with all finesse of a butcher that being a werewolf might give Remus additional qualities but James was still the best rider. Or telling Sirius to get over his stinky family and get in his head that blood doesn't make family. You can choose who stays in your life. Or explain a petrified Harry that he would die for her if the choice was him or her. Or yell at Peter to stop hogging chocolates.

The point is James has never shied away from a thought or voicing anything, irrespective of how intrusive or stupid or dangerous they were. Hell, half of their adventures were because he wanted to try everything. James just didn't know how to explain the weird but concerning situation he saw yesterday.

"Is it Lily? Are you upset that Butler asked her out?", Sirius tried to guess his reason of discomfort

"Prongs, have you decided to spare the world of your word diarrhea?", Remus teased James

"Woah even that comment didn't have a comeback, this must be Sirius.", Sirius said with a proud smile.

"If only *you* could ever be serious.", Remus shot back while flicking Sirius's forehead

"Hey! I am Always Sirius!", Sirius said regally

"Unfortunately for the world.", Remus quipped

"Peter..", James gasped

"He is in library studying for *divination*.", Sirius said dismissively

'Who studies for *divination*?", Remus asked bamboozled

"Peter, apparently. I guess he is hoping that the spirits will bless him with knowledge or something.", Sirius said as he rolled his eyes

"I am all for studying but *divination*? That hocus crap! Why would anyone study for *that*?", Remus said exasperated

"Yeah Herbology, I would have given him a pass. Wormtail has become a tad bit madder since this year began.", Sirius said as he stuffed cookies in his mouth

"I get he is insecure about not get enough OWLS but this is absolutely ridiculous. I don't even know why that shit subject is taught in school, let alone study especially for it in library.", Remus grumbled

"Do you think he shagging in secret?", Sirius asked, clutching his invisible pearls

"The only person we have seen him meet at odd hours has been Yaxley.", Remus dismissed the shagging

"*Eww*, Yaxley! That's revolting! Even if he had to shag a *Slytherin,* why in world would *anyone* be attracted to that hair doll?", Sirius asked in disgust

"Peter has been acting strangely. He has gotten secretive and awkward.", James pointed out

"Now that I think about it Peter has been spending way less time with us and for very odd reasons.", Remus mused

"He has been jumpy around us too.", Sirius added thoughtfully

"And those rendezvous with Yaxley.", James said with a bit of heat

"Hey! Come on, its Peter! Sure he has gone a bit weird but the world outside has gone bonkers too. Maybe its the stress of future making him act out", Remus defended Peter with slight frown

"I caught him tailing Harry yesterday.", James blurted as his nose flared

"What?", Sirius asked, a sudden danger in his voice.

"Why do you think he was following Harry? They could be hanging out together.", Remus counter questioned like a sane human being

" Harry was reading alone at that odd bench she likes. Wormtail was monitoring her from a distance for a while. How many times have we sent him to monitor folks? I know when he monitoring someone. "

Remus eyebrows disappeared in his hair while Sirius listened with rapt attention.

"I waited for him to convert and greet Harry but he stayed there. Eyes trained on Harry as if she was Snape about to attack. Wormtail scurried away when I went to Harry. Peter didn't turn up even later and from our talks, it was clear Harry had no clue where Peter was.", James said with pursed lips

"He is a bit awkward around Harry.", Sirius said slowly

"You think he has a crush on her?", Remus wondered

"I don't think so. He usually does get flustered around girls he likes but it different kind of nervousness he shows around her. ", James replied agitated

"Like he is monitoring her every move.", Sirius said as an afterthought

"Why do you think Peter is acting odd?", Remus asked seriously

"Do you think he doesn't trust her?", James asked

"Why wouldn't he trust Harry?", Sirius asked almost offended

"He keeps pointing out that Harry disappears for a while. It could make him suspicious. I mean, he wasn't there to meet her in the beginning. He might be feeling left out.", Remus explained like a professor

"Harry needs time to alone. Too much socializing tires her out.",

James defended his sister.

"Yeah, she get overwhelmed and usually retires to that lake near the end of forest.", Sirius said with pursed lips

"Or the Quidditch pitch.", Remus added

They all stared at each other wondering why their best friend was acting so off.

"I don't know! But something is definitely off.", Remus said suddenly in frustration

"We would talk about it later.", Sirius said suddenly cheerful

"Agreed!", James said he smiled brightly too

"Heya, Harry, Lily. You smell flowery.", Remus greeted them

Harry rolled her eyes. Lily giggled as girls settled down with them.

Boys decided to shelf the conversation for now and spend time with their friends. It was clear a talk with Peter was necessary.

Chapter End Notes

Happy New Year..new month of the year!?!
Anyways....what do you think?

Chapter 14

"Hello, Cousin dear."

Lily felt a chill crawl her spine as Bellatrix regally sat in an empty chair.

Lily oddly remembered the morning headline "Minister of Magic under Imperious Charm!" "Is anyone safe in today's world?"

It seems fitting that the day they had all decided to ignore the grim situation waiting outside Hogwarts, darkest situation walked right to them. Lily bit back a sigh as she saw Severus lurk behind a big muscled Death Eater.

So much for hope.

"Fuck off.", Sirius dismissed them without bothering to even look up from his food.

Lily took stalk of the situation.

Danger No. 1: Bellatrix Lestrange. She was rumored to the top aid of Dark side. There were whispers that she was even more inhumane and crazy than Dark Lord himself. There was an elegance and danger in equal measure pouring from Bellatrix. Lily had no doubt that if Bellatrix wished, she would kill them all and then saunter to her normal life without nary a thought of those murdered.

Danger No. 2: Lestranges. The brothers were notorious for being extensively well versed in Dark Magic. The Elder son, married to Bellatrix, was clearly the brain behind the Lestrange operations. The young one, well, was still wearing Harry's gift on his head. 'TWIT' really enhanced his otherwise bland personality.

Danger No. 3: Severus. If he wanted Severus could be the most dangerous of them all. He was cunning, patient and powerful. He would wait for right situation to make a strike and when he would attack, the target would perish.

Danger No.4: The lackys. Lily dismissed them. They seemed more muscles than brain.l

"I have to say Sirius, for someone who is going to be Heir of the most important Wizarding Family, your lack of common etiquettes is

alarming.", Bellatrix said condescendingly as she huffed and plopped down

"Oh, so you do know how to sit on your own. Good girl!", Sirius in childish voice while clapping slowly.

Bellatrix rolled her eyes and said after some pause," You folks seem to be missing a member."

"Ah, yes. Patience. It usually evacuates, the moment you enter.", Sirius said sarcastically as he relaxed in his chair.

James and Remus, on the other hand, had subtly repositioned themselves to defend/attack. While Peter was sitting in a funny way as if about to bolt, the moment situation got out of hand. James furrowed at Peter.

"Your intended.", Bellatrix drawled

"And why would I make her suffer through this?", Sirius asked good naturedly as he pointed to the uninvited guests

"If she is going to be family, I should know her.", Bellatrix said as she leaned to stare at Sirius

"You realize, I *want* her to marry me. Meeting you would surely send her for the hills. So you can meet her at the wedding, if you haven't been locked in the Azkaban by then.", Sirius said with a smile

"So tell me Sirius, how does a player as you fall so hard for someone you barely knew?", Bellatrix asked suspiciously, all the while staring hard in Sirius's twinkling eyes

"She is one of a kind, my dear crazy cousin. It wasnt difficult to decide to surrender uncontested.", Sirius said playfully but Lily noticed a tone of truth

"So has she gone into hiding or was she kidnapped again?", Bellatrix sneered

"Ah, if that's the case, cousin dearest, then my wrath will follow the kidnappers.", Sirius said with a smile that made sprout goosebumps all over Lily.

Apparently calling truce on meeting Harry, Bellatrix smirked and leaned back, relaxed,. Death Eaters shuffled nervously behind her. Lily

thanked the lords that Harry had at last minute decided to accompany Alice to get her stationary items.

"Bella, I am trying to have a nice day. Go ruin someone else's day, will you? My mind is already numbing by overexposure to your presence.", Sirius dismissed as he dug enthusiastically into his noodles.

"Tsk. Tsk. Is this how you speak to family?", Bellatrix tutted

"No, this is how I speak with raving mad people.", Sirius said as he finished his food.

Sirius patted his stomach happily, completely unbothered with the crazy situation they were in. For Sirius, this must be a normal Sunday. If Lily thought about it, Sirius's relatives were all very intense and creepy. How did he turn out to be relatively normal and nice?

"I heard you got a new tattoo?", Bellatrix asked bypassing Sirius comment

"Ah, its a beauty! I thought of immortalizing the time you punched yourself.", Sirius said with a nostalgic grin

"You jinxed me and you know it.", Bellatrix protested

"Duh...", Sirius prodded Bellatrix as his eyes danced mischievously

"You insolent boy.", Bellatrix grumbled.

Sirius barked a laugh.

"Then why didn't you decorate your arm with my humiliating moment instead of that hideous Lion?", Bellatrix said as she eyed his Gryffindor lion tattoo in distaste.

"You dont invite Dementors into your home willingly, my dear dark arts loving cousin." , Sirius said breezily as he tapped on the tattoo and it roared.

Bellatrix jumped back as did other viewing party. Marauders laughed and started to enjoy the butterbeer. Only they would this calm and chill in such situation. Peter hands were shaking so much that the beer was dropping everywhere. Remus was studying Peter with a very peculiar expression. James was doing non-verbal spells on unsuspecting Death eaters.

"Alright, enough entertainment for the day. Off you go. Sod off!",

Sirius waved farewell to the sullen party.

"You would realize soon, Sirius, that the people you are willing to leave everything behind, will not a blink one second before turning on you. You will come back to us in the end because, despite your disdain, we are your family.", Bellatrix said solemnly

"If only our family had managed to inherit the spirit and blessings of divination. We could have avoided so much stupidity. It would have definitely prevented this unhappy reunion.", Sirius chirped

Bellatrix glared at Sirius. There was a commotion when few people walked in and then backed out seeing the scene. Death Eaters shuffled as the place got crowded.

Bellatrix yelped.

"Oye, you nimrod! Remove your hand from the chair. You pulled my hair!", Bellatrix complained

"Probably the only time i will say this but good job, you budding Death Eater.", Sirius said cheerfully.

Bellatrix snagged Sirius's drink from his hand in retaliation.

"Why do you drink this cheap stuff?", Bellatrix grimaced as she chugged a huge chunk of the beer

"Builds immunity.", Sirius said with a grin

Bellatrix looked at the drink suspiciously," Immunity? For what?"

"To handle bitter people.", Sirius said with a smirk while staring pointedly at the gathered sullen Death Eaters

"You cannot be that naive about the reality, Sirius.", Bellatrix said in concern

"Oh, my love blind cousin, I can see the reality. It you lurking lot who have bid adieu to your common sense and intelligence. If you ever had any to begin with.", Sirius said off-handedly.

"And pray, what are those facts that you are so aware of?", Bellatrix asked testily

"That your Lord Voldemort is a fraud.", Sirius drawled

A collective flinch and cowering went around the 'intimidating ' Death Eater. Sirius barked a laugh.

Peter's drink slipped from his hand and he drowned in the beer. Peter squeaked and escaped to the washroom. James and Remus's eyes were rivetted to him.

"My Lord is not a fraud, you fool! He is the greatest wizard of our times!", Bellatrix said, slamming her hands on the table

"Oh, I am not denying the bloke is powerful. Greatest is still away.... way away on the horizon. He still pretty tame on terror scale compared to Grindelwald. ", Sirius said with a shrug as if discussing weather

"He is greatest! You haven't seen him perform magic!", Bellatrix reverently

"I have seen Dumbledore perform magic and trust me, no one is coming near the power that odd man has.", Sirius said as he snatched his drink back from Bellatrix

"He is Lord.."

"Lord of what and who?"

"Of us, Purebloods!"

"And who made him that?"

"We of course."

"So you are saying the purest and wealthiest families in the Wizarding world are following someone who claims to be our Lord? Wow and I thought Gryffindor's were supposed to be the barmy ones.", Sirius said rationally

"We are following the Pureblood savior!", Bellatrix seethed as she stood up

"Is he a pureblood?", Sirius asked calmly

"Of course, he is.", Bellatrix said arrogantly

"How do you know?", Sirius asked curiously

"Why else would he fight against half bloods and mudbloods?",

Bellatrix asked in 'duh' tone

"Hey Snape, what is your blood status, you Dark Magic loving idiot?", James hollered suddenly

"Half-blood.", Snape sneered

"Isnt he one of your faithful minions?", James said

"He is... but...", Bellatrix stuttered.

"You dumb fools! He isn't a Lord or a Pureblood. I would be surprised if he is even a proper Half blood. He was smart to see what you dumb fucks were desperate for and used it to Lord all over you. He is smart, I will give him that", Sirius grudgingly

"He is *not* a half blood.", Bellatrix defended passionately and added after a shudder ran through her body," Or a mudblood."

"Bella, come on. You are not stupid. You are bat shit crazy, but not dumbwit. After spending half our childhood cramming the entire bloody history of Pureblood, have you ever seen a name Voldemort? Anywhere in the *world*? Not even the past extinct lines! There is no one named Voldemort. Its like those Superheroes muggle's make in their comics to make themselves unique, different and, well, unrecognizable to people who know them", Sirius dissected pureblood mania, calmly

The whole pub was listening with bated breath.

"Enough with your muggle references!", Bellatrix screeched.

"If you folks are cunning as you claim to be, you would at least find out who the hell you are all following on your downfall. I mean, you are planning on spending your life in Azkaban. It would be pretty hilarious and ironic if this Pureblood Savior turned out to be muggleborn or half bloods.", Sirius snickered

Sirius leaned into Bellatrix's personal space and asked a dramatically, "How, how, how are you going keep your superiority? How, how are you going to face the other Death Eater guys? How, how are you going to face yourself? How would you show your face to the world? How would you face the mirror? And if cant see mirror, you know how hideous you become, Bella. Is it really worth unleashing your hideousness for world to suffer, your end goal?"

"He is Slytherin Heir!", Bellatrix panicked as she shuffled away from Sirius

"Then surely there is a record of him in Hogwarts. ", Sirius said with a smug smile

"Umm.. *oh*.", Bellatrix said stumped

"Don't stress your already extremely overworked brain, he ain't in any Hogwarts log. And I know because I checked it, years ago.", Sirius said satisfied

"You are wrong. You are messing with me!", Bellatrix balked

"How is he a Slytherin Heir if he never stepped foot in Hogwarts? Better yet, why is he hiding his real name then? There is no way a pureblood would hide his name. Even the poorest and horridly disgraced purebloods have a standing in our world.", Sirius said spirited

Bellatrix's eyes were wide. Murmurs started in the pub. Severus had his thinking face on.

"That dungeon really slows your tiny brains down, huh? Oh, well! You will learn sooner or later that your *Lord* is just a turd.", Sirius saying so got up with flare as he has not just shaken the foundation of Voldemort's supporters.

Meanwhile The Marauders got up to leave without engaging into a fight. Lily saw Harry canvasing the situation. Lily had no doubt that if they didn't leave right now without a fight, Harry would burst in.

"Try to stay away from Azkaban as much as possible, cousin dearest. I would hate to visit you in Azkaban to laugh at your face.", Sirius said loudly to draw attention to himself and away from his intended.

James conspicuously placed Lily between Remus and himself. They moved casually but in alert towards the gate to drag Harry away from danger. Sirius, on the other hand, hugged a befuddled Bellatrix as a stunned crowd gaped. Even James paused in exit to see the scene.

"What do you think you are doing?", Bellatrix spluttered

Sirius gave her one last squeeze and said with a smirk ," Sometimes you have to hug people to know how big of a hole to dig in your backyard. *Adios*!"

Sirius sauntered leaving a reluctantly amused Bellatrix and shell shocked Death Eaters behind.

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

Apologies for the long wait. Hope you guys like this <3

"Who is Lord Voldemort?"

Harry felt satisfaction steep in her bones as she read the article on credibility of Tom Marvalo Riddle.

After the absolute smacking Sirius gave Bellatrix, the conversation had spread like wildfire. It was rumored that several sympathizer of Voldemort's cause had demanded proof of Voldemort's blood status.

Harry was confident that Voldemort would be pissed and would do something dramatic. Despite his power and fear he inspired in people, Voldemort will end up losing a lot of supporters because if you are starting genocide on blood status, you better believe people will take leader's blood status into consideration.

Voldemort had to unleash the terror of Chambers of secrets to prove his disgruntled followers that he is Slytherin Heir and worthy leader for this mission. His blood status won't matter that much to prejudiced folks if he was Slytherin heir. Harry wanted to install fear in Voldemort that someone knows about him more than he ever wanted anyone to know. Presenting dead Basilisk in Chamber of Secret would definitely drive the point across and if it helped making an awesome weapon to destroy his soul, then why not?

Harry was not aware of the hatred and bloodlust that Roasters carried for its own offspring. The carnage that was left behind after mere minutes of unleashing the terrifying hunters on Basilisk, was awe-inspiring and blood chilling at same time.

The body of basilisk now lay in Chamber of secrets with a huge glittery board carrying below message.

'Tom Marvalo Riddle, hope you like my present. ;)

Much like I liked the Ravenclaw Diadem :.*

-The Real Slytherin Heir. :D'

She signed today's date to make Voldemort as paranoid as possible. Harry wanted Voldemort to focus his absolute energy on finding and hunting her so that he would leave others.

Harry and Dumbledore were working silently to eradicate the filths, Voldemort's horcruxes, from the world. Except this timeline was different and a lot of things were changing. Harry had finished off Ravenclaw's Diadem that sitting pleasantly in Room of Requirement. Dumbledore had found the address for Gaunt's house. After she got rid of the curse, she gave Dumbledore the ring for a night to quell his demons of past. No one deserves to live in such crippling guilt for so long. The ring was now safely hidden by her under Buckingham Palace vault floor.

Dumbledore had managed to get confirmation that Voldemort has used Lestrange's vault to hide a dear item in it. With Bellatrix hair in their possession, that Harry had pulled during the epic confrontation with Sirius, they were set to destroy it during upcoming full moon. She was lucky that Bellatrix thought that one of her minions had pulled her hair.

Harry didn't know how they would get the rest of the three horcruxes: locket, diary and Nagini.

With shifting alliances of Black and Malfoys, Dumbledore was still searching the location of all three. They had gone to cave on an off chance that Voldemort used some other elf to do his dirty work. Except for chilling their bones in ice cold water, they found nothing of worthy. Dumbledore had set an undetectable charm in the cave to let them know if a spell has been cast in that cursed cave.

Harry bit her lips as she read another muggleborn family had been brutally murdered by Death Eaters. Reading such news made her so guilty. What use was her knowledge when she couldn't save innocent people from being murdered?

"Its time for using Veritaserum to help nab Death Eaters and give appropriate punishments for their crimes. No more lies!- Minister Bones"

"Imperius cursed sacked Minister of Magic has shifted his base to Spain."

"Prominent Ministry Employee, Umbridge, ejected from Ministry on charges of unethical use of power."

Reading last news, Harry wonders she could throw a big party. The evil toad has been ousted before she could ruin further lives.

Dumbledore has been actively pushing Werewolf welfare Bill, which categorizes werewolf as humans suffering from chronic disease. This bill would help rehabilitate werewolves back in society, give them jobs and sanctuaries for safe full moon. It was gaining traction as it was an great way of reducing the increasing werewolf attacks. James and Sirius were actively pitching it to prominent houses to get it passed. Hey if anyone can do the impossible, it was this duo.

"Well, you certainly caused a stir.", Reg interrupted her musing

Sirius flashed a cocky grin to Reg and then continued to munch on his food aggressively. Harry chocked back her laughter from spilling out at the disgust that was radiating out of Reg watching his brother eat like a wild animal. Maybe it was a universal thing, the urge to annoy your siblings by just being in their presence.

"How can you be so uncultured, you swine?", Reg said in disgust as he threw a napkin at Sirius's face.

Sirius slurped dramatically as he slapped the napkin back at Reg who deflected it at Remus. Remus smacked Sirius's head in retaliation but instead got James, who revolted by attacking Remus over Sirius.

Reg said in wonder," They all share same brain cell."

"Who has it now?", Lily asked jokingly

"Me."

Came from three different sources.

"Sure.", Harry said, rolling her eyes.

"What happened to you?", Reg asked Peter, who was sitting sullen in his seat.

"None of your business.", Peter snapped and stormed out of the dining hall.

Remaining Marauders paused in middle of their squabble to watch Peter.

"That was odd.", Harry pursed her lips

"He heard some bad news from home.", Remus said seriously

Harry frowned. Despite her best efforts in steering Marauders into

Peter's secret, she was not successful. That rat has managed to escape the interrogation with flying colors. Peter had blamed his weird behavior on his father's "ill' health. He claimed to be stalking Yaxley to get information on Death Eaters activities, as Yaxely was rumored to be recruiting students for Dark side. Harry almost screaming bloody murder when he claimed to stalk Harry as he didn't trust anyone new in the family.

The Marauders believed that bloody, lying, traitor rat. This was more frustrating then anything else she has ever endured in her life.

"Anyhooo, who am I stirring?", Sirius asked suggestively

"Why do you have to make everything an innuendo?", Reg grumbled

"I get you folks in the dungeons like everything tied up, but come out of the ground and you would find a lovely world full of fun, laughter and childishness.", Sirius said dreamily

"Its like talking to a wall.", Reg groaned

Remus cut before Sirius could reply," So what happened?"

Reg gave Remus a grateful look and said seriously," Father has decided to withdraw support from Voldemort till his origins are knows. I have heard Malfoy and Sharif are all pulling back support as well. Several houses will soon follow."

Sirius asked hopefully, " Is Bella still supporting that dickshit?"

"I think, she would. So is mother. She has sent me a raving letter. Surprised you didn't receive one.", Reg asked

"Oh, I did. It went straight to fire, unopened. I don't need that kind of negativity in my life. I get it enough on breaks.", Sirius said lazily

Reg snorted but then looked down in thought.

Sirius said gently," I guess it was too much to hope that Bella would mend her ways if shown the truth."

"Yeah.", Reg said sadly

They all lapsed into silence.

"Hey, you gloomy faces.", Alice said merrily coming from outside

"Are we having any more practice James?", Marlena asked

"Yupppp, practice all day Saturday.", James said enthusiastically

Groaned resonated from the team.

"When we win, drinks on me.", James said happily

"Good man.", Mary thumped James on back and left.

"Oh my god! Look at the time! We are going to be late!", Remus said suddenly

"Today should be exciting! We are learning Patronus charm!", James said happily

"I have heard it is one of the most complex spells to master.", Lily said nervously

"This spell requires more than wand movement and spell. It can be performed by strong individual who are able to focus on happiness in face of abject sadness and horror.", Remus said patiently

A whole section of Gryffindor guarded them to the class. The Slytherin-Gryffindor rivalry had reached a boiling point with match just days away. The whole house had taken it upon themselves to safeguard their players to such an extent that Harry has been unable to go to washroom alone, let alone go to Room of Requirements to practice her spells.

"It is said that the Patronus reveals your true spirit.", Remus added nervously as he looked at the students surrounding them.

"I sooo want to see who would be perfect pairing!", Sirius said in glee, completely unbothered as he slug his arm around Harry's shoulder.

"Perfect pairing?", Lily asked confused

"So usually the spirit is an animal. If the other person has the opposite gender of your spirit, then chances of you being perfect match is extremely high.", James explained merrily

Sirius squeezed Harry's shoulder as he winked at her. Harry felt a hopeless smile come over her as she got lost in the molten grey eyes. Harry can write essays on Sirius's eyes. James cleared his throat to break their intense connect.

"Last perfect pairing was Dumbledore's parents and we know how that turned out. It is huge in Pureblood circles.", Sirius said offhandedly as he moved a strand of Harry's hair behind her ears.

"The shape says something undeniable about the person. For example, if he is a dog, then he is loyal to a fault. If he is a rat then he is a deserter and will leave the ship at first sign of distress.", Harry said softly as she tried to gather herself.

"Well, it is true. Patronus like animagus reveals the true traits of a person.", James said cheerfully as he butted between them.

"Some traits are intrinsic of person's character.", Harry said as she cleared her throat to stop blushing.

"It does.", Remus said deep in thought.

"Would Animagus and Patronus form be same for a person?", Lily asked intrigued

"Don't know but maybe we should ask Minnie in next class.", James said gleefully

They all stood outside the class waiting for teacher to open the door.

"I see you have decided to break out your spring collection, Snape."

Harry and Lily giggled as a flabbergasted Snape checked his dark grey clothing.

"It must nice to take a break from detentions, to actually learn useful stuff.", Snape snapped back

"Ah, Snapey. Are you this snappy because we manage to outscore your studious brilliance in every class?", Sirius taunted

"And by such wide margin.", James joined in

"So this is your mourning clothes then?", Sirius grinned as he pointed at Snape's grey outfit

Snape threw a spell at the duo just Professor opened door.

"Mr. Snape! Detention for a week and 30 points off Slytherins for using dark spell in corridor on unarmed fellow students.", Professor said angrily.

Flushed Snape nodded as Marauders thanked Professor for saving them from cruel Slytherins.

Harry giggled as Sirius winked at her. He grabbed her hand and pulled her to a back seat. Harry's heart was in race to break her ribs at such his simple actions. Sirius grinned crookedly at her, making her blush deep red.

Harry wondered for 100th time if suggesting to be in fake relationship with a guy she was developing intense feelings for, is what kills her.

She didn't find in herself to mind if that was the case.

Chapter 16

Lily groaned in frustration as she stared gloomily at her sad attempt at Patronus charm. Not even a wisp came out of her wand. This was the first spell that she has not been able to master within an hour. The only solace she had was that everyone else was struggling as abysmally as she was.

Well, everyone except Potters and Black. Those three were chilling on the side, eating popcorn. Remus was muttering darkly as he struggled with the spell. Peter was turning green as he tried the spell.

"I read everything about this spell. Why is this not working?", Remus complained beside her, resonating her sentiment

"Now, now. Don't worry if you are not able to master this spell. It is one of the hardest spell to master. Many of the adult wizards still cant produce them. It needs immense courage, concentration, purity of heart and energy to produce a full corporeal Patronus. I would be surprised if anyone would be even able to produce an incorporeal one today.", Professor Twain soothed the frustrated students

"Why bother to learn this?", Lestrange whined as he failed to produce again

" When we are confronted with inhuman evil, such as the Dementor, we must draw upon resources we might never have needed. The Patronus is the charm that takes the purity of your soul and characteristics and defends you from the darkness around. This charm is the very thing Dementor feed on- hope, love and desire to survive. To do so you must think of a happiest memory and project your happiness.", Professor explained calmly

"Professor, what do you mean by purity of heart?", Alice said as she titled her head slightly

"Only people with pure intentions, that is those who wish to save others, can produce this charm. Any Dark wizard or ill intended wizard will be devoured by Maggots coming from their wand. So lets use the purest and happiest of thoughts and practice this spell that might save you and your loved ones life in this dark time.", Professor Twain ended ominously

Remus stared at Sirius and James with a inscrutable look. The three

came to Remus immediately with encouraging smile.

"Remus, try to focus on people that make you happy. That works too.", Harry whispered gently.

All of them stared at her. Harry shrugged the unasked question off.

"Alright, try what Harry is suggesting. Think of people that make you happy and think of protecting them from all harm.", Sirius said encouragingly.

"There you go you produced incorporeal one!", James cheered them on as Remus managed to produced one.

"Well done, Mr Lupin. Take 10 points to Gryffindor!", Professor Twain said encouragingly

"And you weren't eaten by Maggots! So yay, your pure soul!", Sirius added as he thumped Remus on back

Remus gave him a side look but his drooped shoulders straighten out and he let out a small relieved laugh.

"Why are you three not stewing with the rest of the class?", Mary asked in frustration as her charm failed to take any form

"And overshadow you all like that?", Sirius asked innocently

"You know we are not like that.", James said with innocence dripping his words as he *humbly* cleaned his glasses and smirk.

"Since when?", Lily snorted

James held his invisible pearls and said, "My dear Lily, how dare you question our character like that?"

"You know, he has none.", Sirius said slyly as his eyes twinkled madly

"Yeah...hey! Arsehole! I have a *staggering* character to be reckoned with!", James defended his character loudly and proudly

"As brilliant as a deer. .", Remus snorted

"Mr Black, Mr Potter and Miss Potter, want to give it try?", Professor Twain popped up behind them ending what looked like a start to a long 'discussion'

"Who are we to deny a Professor's request.", Sirius said regally

As one, both produced a full corporeal Patronus, much to delight of everyone sans Slytherins. Sirius's dog circled around Potters and then settled at Harry's feet, protectively. Sirius grinned unabashedly at beetroot Harry.

Meanwhile, James's Patronus Stag galloped across the room. He stopped in front of Lily, who promptly turned redder than Harry, and then sauntered towards Harry. After playing with Sirius's Patronus dog for some time, dissolved bumping into a suddenly melancholic Harry.

"Well done Mr Black and Mr Potter. Very impressive! A full corporeal Patronus with defined shaped and still holding on. Brilliant! Take 50 points each to Gryffindor!", Professor Twain beamed and then motioned Harry to try.

Harry breathed deeply, squared her shoulder. Smiling beautifully, she produced an almost identical smaller Stag. It circled around Lily, Remus, Sirius and James. Eventually it settled down in front of Sirius and James.

"Fantastic! Absolutely brilliant! Take another 50 points to Gryffindor! Its very interesting that both of your patronesses are Stags.", Professor Twain said delighted.

"Its a family trait, Professor. Father has a majestic Stag too!", James said proudly as he smacked a kiss on Harry's cheek.

"Lets see how long you can hold the form, Miss Potter! Absolutely incredible!", Professor said as she bounced on her feet.

James beamed proudly. Harry grinned back happily at James. There was a look of nostalgia and love radiating so strongly from Harry that it made Lily's heart clench.

"Excellent, sister dearest! I knew you were strong but this is amazing! Wait till I tell dad and mom. They are so going to throw a party for you!", James said excitedly, distracting Harry.

Harry's stag vanished as she spluttered at the outrageous kiss Sirius blew at her, which James missed as he eyed a struggling Peter. Lily stifled her laugh as Sirius winked at her. Sirius had with one move pulled Harry out of her dark abyss.

"Brilliant! Absolutely brilliant! No home work for you three.",

Professor said happily, completely sidestepping the blatant flirting.

The three whooped, everyone rolled their eyes.

"Lily, think about your parents and then about protecting them. Go on, try.", Harry guided Lily gently.

Lily thought about her parents but at last minute, her eyes clashed with James and she yelled, "*Expecto Patronum*!"

A huge, beautiful doe spurt out of her wand. Gasps were heard all around. Severus lips curled as he flipped his hair and walked to the opposite side of the classroom.

Sirius poked James, who was staring at the Doe with glazed eyes. Remus eyes were glittering. Harry stared at the Doe with a small private smile gracing her face.

"I knew it!", James said triumphantly

Lily felt embarrassment coming in spades. She prayed that the floor would swallow her up. The teasing would be unbearable now.

"You and Harry are *the* prefect coupling. Sorry, mate! We might have to call off your courtship with my sister now.", James said wickedly

"No! How could you, Lily? My love, don't leave me!", Sirius said in despair as he grabbed Harry's hand in 'desperation', who was moving towards Lily.

"Ah, I am sorry, dearest. But I think Magic has spoken. Its clesr Lily is my soulmate. Farewell my intended, for I pledge my love to Lily!", Harry said dramatically as she 'tried' to pull her hands away from Sirius to go to Lily.

Sirius hugged Harry and 'cried' in despair. Everyone was in splits. Lily thanked James with her eyes for removing the focus from her. James and Sirius winked at her as Sirius continued to howl at losing his intended.

"Ah, Professor. I think my intended is suffering from *Sirius* heartbreak. Would you mind terribly if we took off early to drown his sorrow?", Harry asked Professor stoically. Her eyes were dancing in mirth.

"Why, of course, my dear! Take the rest of the class to overcome this tragic loss, my young warrior!", Professor conceded playfully as she

patted a 'distraught' Sirius on back.

"Thank you Professor but without my true love, I don't think I can go.", Sirius said pitifully as he grabbed James on the way out.

"Moony, get our things!", James hollered as the three left to drown their *sorrows*.

"Ahem."

"Hello, Lily-bears. How are you, darling?", a stumbling, alcohol stinking Sirius said happily

"I am good, Sirius. I am impressed that after consuming a tower of drinks, you are still standing on your feet.", Lily joked as she supported an extremely leaning Sirius.

"Blacks produce the best stock with crazy genes and useless skills.", Sirius slurred proudly

"WE WONNNNNNN!!!!!"

James screamed from top of table, pulling Harry with him. They both started to jump in joy, completely hammered. James looked so bloody cute with his extremely messy hair, lopsided glasses and crumpled jersey. Lily pushed down the very strong urge to go and pull James's cute cheeks. Lily couldn't help the helpless smile seeing the Potter siblings so deliriously happy. Sirius gave her a knowing look.

"They make you feel that, don't they?', Sirius asked softly

"Like what?", Lily asked curiously

"Like life is worth everything if they are in it. Like they are the Sun, giving you reason to laugh, live and love.", Sirius said poetically

Lily would have been impressed with his maturity if Sirius didn't almost topple both of them and burped.

The Quidditch match was electrifying to say the least. Potters and Sirius had been outstanding on field.

James was brilliant on the field. He had strategized so brilliantly that Slytherin team resembled a kids team come to play pro tournament. The match was sweetly poised at 90-20 with Gryffindor looking

dangerous. James had scored 5 times already. Then the ugliness started.

Slytherin Beaters started to target James exclusively, except Sirius was there to stop the attack every time. So they changed tactics and attacked rest of the team. Marlena protected them as best as she could but they managed to take out Watson, Gryffindor Keeper. The games tilted on its head and suddenly scores were 90-90.

Harry, who was nursing a bruised shoulder, took a sudden dive so straight down that resulted in Lily's shriek reach a frequency only heard by bats. Lily watched as Harry continued to race towards the ground without breaking a sweat. Reg followed right at her heels when suddenly Harry turned around and shot up. Reg, somehow, managed to not crash and followed Harry. Harry's arm were outstretched as she zig zagged her way through the players and killer flying balls. A bludger that was about into smash Harry's face, was smacked back at an unsuspecting Slytherin Chaser by a ferocious Sirius.

Harry undeterred and unbothered raced towards the snitch while Reg closed the distance. Harry threw herself *off the broom*, while being 30 feet above the ground. Lily screamed as Harry plummeted towards a certain death. Reg immediately flew after her.

Harry was snatched to safety by her deliriously happy brother. The whole school shook at the thunderous applause that came upon realizing that not only has Harry made a daring catch but James has managed to save her from falling to ground in style.

Sirius groan brought Lily back to the present.

"If you puke on me, I will bury you where no one will ever find you.", Lily warned Sirius

"Blacks can handle their drinks, Lily.", Sirius said aristocratically

"Clearly.", Lily said in disbelief as Sirius burped again

Lily rolled her eyes. Sirius rubbed his chest as he stared tenderly at Harry.

"Alright there, lover boy? Why don't you go and dance with her?", Lily teased him

"This is James's time with her. I will never steal it. She will find me

when they are done.", Sirius said dismissively as he continued to rub his chest

"What is wrong then?", Lily wondered if wizards get alcohol poisoning

"She is just so amazing!", Sirius pouted like a cute baby

"That she is. How is she courting you, I will never know?", Mary popped suddenly into their conversation

"Excuse you but I am one of a kind! And she is my forever!", Sirius said haughtily

"Is she? I mean, Lily could be her forever. What with perfect pairing and all.", Alice teased

Sirius looked at her betrayed," Lily, how dare you steal my amazing intended?"

"Well, if you tell me what color her eyes are, I might just leave her for you.", Lily bargained playfully

Given the level of intoxication in this man, she did not think he would be even able to tell what day it is.

Sirius paused as if internally searching for an answer.

They all shook their heads and were about to disband when Sirius said in a tone of love, care and dream mixed together ,

"It looks brownish, like earth after rain, in first glance. If you look closer, its dark green like deep forest housing innumerous secrets in it. Her eyes becomes light, molten green, when she is happy. Sometimes in sun its almost blueish like calm sea waiting for you. Her eyes are like pure fire, powerful enough to consume you when she is pissed. When she flies, her eyes are strikingly green like a summer breeze."

They all stared at him dumbfounded. Mary hugged Sirius while Alice patted Sirius's cheeks at the adorableness. They left to join rest of the party.

Lily felt teary. She felt blessed to be able to witness the transformation of the boy, who couldn't remember name of his date, to a man who remembers the minutest details of his love. A man who was falling hard for an equally amazing girl. There was peace and stability that

Lily had picked on since start of this year, radiating out of Sirius.

Lily grinned brightly at Sirius and hugged him. Bewildered Sirius patted her back.

"I am so happy that you found the person you were looking for, Sirius!", Lily said with heart brimming with happiness and love that the boy, who she considers as her brother in many ways.

She felt honored that after Marauders, Sirius has always felt comfortable talking to her about things that he would never be caught dead talking in public. He asked her questions to understand Muggle culture early in their Hogwarts journey to unlearn the biases he has been ingrained since birth. He worked hard to undo his prejudice and ignorance.

If anyone deserved a happily ever after, it was this selfless, stubborn, righteous man here. He fought his family, his birthright and his upbringing, to do what is right. No matter the cost. He deserved someone who would love him and cherish him for who he is

Sirius's eyes brightened and moistened a bit as he smiled gently at her.

"I know, she is one of a kind.", Sirius said with unbearably sweet smile as he gazed at Harry, who was singing very off key with James

"So what are you waiting for?", Lily asked him, perplexed why he was still standing with her

"I am basking in glow of her untainted happiness with another part of my soul. I am in no hurry for her to reach me.", Sirius said with a peaceful smile

Lily realized with a start that Sirius's feeling for Harry were not beginning but they have already seeped into his very being. Whether he knew it or not was another question. This Sirius was mature and understanding of the pain and struggle Harry hid from others and he was in no rush for her to let him completely in.

Sirius cocked his head and asked her slyly," What are you waiting for?"

"Huh?", Lily asked confused at the sudden change in conversation

Sirius tilted his head to point James and said smugly," Magic showed you what your ego didn't want to accept."

Lilly blushed rapidly as she shyly glanced at source of all her recent dreams.

"So Lily, what are you waiting for?", Sirius prodded

Lily had no answer. She was caught off guard at being called out on her denial.

"Are you going to wait till its too late?", Sirius said he waved at James, who sandwiched between two girls

Harry reached Sirius, who promptly had heart eyes and melted in her presence, with a glorious smile as she glowed in unburdened happiness.

"Sirius, dance with me?", Harry asked Sirius, breathlessly

"With you, forever, my love.", Sirius said with love brimming from his every pore as he took Harry hand and swung her around.

Harry giggled as Sirius danced with her. They were twirling and dancing in their own world.

Lily wondered what was she waiting for and if it was worth the wait as James sauntered outside with a 5th year pretty girl.

Chapter 17

"Merlin! Can he be any more exhausting?", James whined as soon as Lord Dolohov walked away.

"I think he took 5 years of my life with him.", Sirius groaned as he cracked his neck.

"Ah, looks like your darling cousin is going to grace us with her presence.", James warned them

"Finally, I get to meet the elusive Potter.", Bellatrix said haughtily as she snaked her way

James's hair stood in attention. There was underlying current of hostility that flowed through the group. Bellatrix, dressed in a dark green gown with serpent jewels, grinned creepily enough that James was sure his nightmare will borrow it.

Sirius's arm wrapped protectively around Harry, who was watching Bellatrix with an air of amusement.

"I didnt know there was a waiting line to meet me.", Harry said lightly as she raised her eyebrow at Bellatrix

"Well my dearest cousin is awfully protective of his delicate fiancée. ", Bellatrix shot her barbs still smiling and creeping the bejesus out of James.

Harry snorted as Sirius’s finger tightened around Harry's waist while James positioned himself better to defend, should need arise. He saw Dad and Mr. Black look at the encounter with curiosity and nonchalance. James felt a bit better. There was no way dad would let anything bad happen to them.

"So, Harry Potter....", Bellatrix hissed

"Bella, fuck off.", Sirius gritted out

"Now, now cousin dear, we won't want to spoil your intended's grand launch, do we? I am simply introducing family to your future bride. ", Bella said coyly

"You. .."

Sirius's angry burst was diffused by Harry slight touch on Sirius's arm. Sirius smiled softly at Harry.

"Well, well. You have been tamed.", Lestrange mocked from Bellatrix's side.

Sirius rolled his eyes and said unabashedly, " Takes one to know one. At least I am just tamed by awesomeness, unlike your many creepy, unhinged masters."

"If you *are* courting, how have we never seen you two so much as snog?", Bloom Carrow said snidely

"We really need to get you in touch with some good porn material, Bloom. Unless, of course, you are into voyeurism .", James said with roguish smile in attempt to avoid unraveling of their ruse.

Bloom squealed as she stepped back while rapidly getting red. James rolled his eyes at the 'innocence'.

Bellatrix's eyes were twitching as Harry continued to smile cheerfully at the threatening Death Eaters.

"So newly minted Pureblood, you must be thrilled at managing to snag the Heir of the Purest, richest and powerful Pureblood family. ", Bellatrix sneered as she leaned forward, crowding their personal space

"She must be super talented to have managed to tame the Player so quickly.", Astride added with poisonous look towards Harry.

Bellatrix was laser focused on Harry's reaction, as if cataloging everything. Harry grinned widely, making Bellatrix frown.

"It must really grate your nerves that you had to marry a Lestrange to keep the bloodline pure. While your cousin has been given ticket to marry a newly minted Pureblood, despite being a heir to the Purest, richest and powerful Pureblood family?", Harry said softly as she patted shocked Bellatrix's arm.

Bellatrix recoiled back from Harry sympathic expression and gentle touch, as if burned. James and Sirius bit their lips to control their laughter.

" It must be especially horrible situation for you. To be held responsible for holding the crazy Pureblood ideology, since your elder sister set the whole ideology on fire. Being in love with a person

whose real name, let alone bloodline, is unknown, must have made your current alliance with Lestranges' so much more frustrating. ", Harry said sympathically to Bellatrix, who was losing color and was spotting comically large eyes.

"I...he...that is not. His blood status is *not* unknown!", Bellatrix said hotly as she stomped her foot.

"So you are in love with conman?", Sirius smirked

"Ouch, beaten by your boss.", James taunted Lestrange, who was getting redder by the second.

"I never said that.", Bellatrix spluttered

"So you know his blood status? Real name?", Harry prodded politely.

James's whole body shook trying to contain his laughter while Sirius spotted a wide grin. Harry had turned tables on Bellatrix and how! The whos who of wizarding world were here and eavesdropping on the conversation.

"I...iiii...", Bellatrix stammered as she nervously eyed around the crowd.

"Sorry, didnt catch that.", Harry goaded with a small smirk

"He is Lord Voldemort.", Bellatrix said as she stood tall and proud.

"Yes, we are well aware of his made up name. ", Harry said slowly as if talking to a slow person.

Sirius snorted and James grin couldnt be contained anymore. The nervousness of Death Eaters was way too amusing to let go.

"He is a powerful pure blood! ", Bellatrix squeaked

"Oh, good! The world can rest now that there is proof. ", Harry said *relieved*

Bellatrix was sweating as she started to back off slowly. Harry grabbed her arm in show of *support*.

"I mean, I was worried for a while, you know. A blood genocide is being driven by him and the blood status or even history of the leader was unknown. Surely, it matters to the conservatives if the leader is honest about himself and his history. ", Harry whisper shot across the

silent crowd.

Everyone had stopped eavesdropping and were fully engaged in what Harry was speaking. Dumbledore grinned as he was swaying to some music that only he heard.

"Can you imagine the ridicule and disgrace his followers would have been under, if Lord Voldemort turned out be a muggleborn or half blood from some new bloodline? What leg would they have in future to justify any of their ideology if their leader turned out to a liar? A conman? A fake!", Harry bemused

James and Sirius were somehow holding their full blown laughter at the dumbstruck expression on all Slytherins.

"I mean, can you imagine? The way all the followers and supporters would be labelled as sheep and spineless idiots, who would follow anyone with a teeny tiny bit of power? Gosh! Imagine the scandal!", a twinkling eyed Harry said

Sirius took a deep breath to control his guffaw at the horror itched on Death Eaters and their supporters. James had to close his eyes in order to gain control.

"But I am glad that is all cleared. So tell us about his fascinating history?", Harry asked *relieved*

"He.. he didn't tell me yet.", Bellatrix mumbled

"Oh my! Do you think he is ashamed of his history? ", Harry gossiped

"Umm.", Bellatrix gulped

"But how is one not aware of their history? Unless he is an orphan! Oh god, is he?", Harry asked scandalized

"No!", Bellatrix said instinctively

"Then?", Harry asked with sly smile

"I hear my sister calling me. It was a pleasure to meet you, Potter.", Bellatrix hurriedly rushed out of the conversation

"Oh, did I hit a nerve?", Harry asked Sirius sassily

Sirius barked a laughter, as he smacked a kiss on Harry's cheek. James chortled seeing the adults freak out while trying to maintain decorum

and image.

"No, my love. You just aced your introduction to Black family.", Sirius said with a proud grin as he twirled a grinning Harry.

Dumbledore motioned band to start playing songs and the rest of the night went in blur, filled with dancing, fun and laughter. Sirius cannot for life of him remember anytime he had that much fun at Pureblood Christmas Ball.

Sirius must have drunk a lot because he could swear he saw Harry apparating away, even as she was dancing a foot away from him the whole night.

"Ready, Harry. "

Dumbledore asked Harry pensively.

"Yes, Professor. Lets do this. ", Harry said as she held on to Dumbledore's hand while the world went back in time.

Harry had floated the idea to Dumbledore of using time turner to search the house and cleanse world of Voldemort soul as much as possible. They had decided to sneak into the manor while real Harry and Dumbledore would continue to be in the party and no one would miss them.

Thinking back the only thing Harry could think was that she was glad Dumbledore was on their side. He would have been impossible to contain otherwise. Dumbledore was a terrifying force when on a mission.

Dumbledore had lured Dolohov into an empty room, feed him truth serum and even made him show where Voldemort's Diary was. He wiped his memory and sent him back all in less than 5 mins. All the while Dumbledore didnt even break a sweat. It was brilliant and scary to think about how easy it was for Dumbledore to do all that.

Harry had found the Diary of Voldemort, when she felt something creeping up on her. She turned in time to see Dumbledore slice Nagini into two pieces, while she was in mid-strike . Her blood covered Harry from head to toe. Harry felt bile rise in her.

Dumbledore and Harry stared at each other. Although this was good

but it would for sure raise suspicion for Voldemort. Commotion nearby shook Harry out of the stupor and she took the sword from Dumbledore. She stabbed the Diary. At same time, band had started to play loud music which covered the ghoulish scream of teen Voldemort, who was in process of emerging from the Diary. It was fascinating seeing partial formed Voldemort scream and collapse without harming them.

Only one Horcrux left. How Harry wished it was also hidden somewhere here. Before leaving the place, Dumbledore converted the dead snake into bed and diary was placed back into the locker. Harry winked at amused Dumbledore as she left the goo filled Diary in the locker with a sparkly note "Slytherin Heir awaits you at his chambers. :D"

This should easily transfer his anger from today's disastrous party onto hunt for Slytherin Heir.

"Why has my Lord left today of all days!?!", Bellatrix walked by, agitated

"Dark Lord cares not for this arse kissing and fakeness, you know that. He said he had to do something important. Once that piece was in place, he would show those bloody blood traitors what he can do.", Dolohov said patiently

"That Potter.. she is so *infuriating*! And my stupid cousin is heads over heels in love with her!", Bellatrix grumbled

"I hear even Lord Black has been taken by her and is all for her to be the next Lady Black. ", Dolohov dissed

"She will go away. Aunt will never allow such a union. Its a pity she is visiting her grandparents in America right now.", Bellatrix dismissed Dolohov

"Its sad, how far the mighty have fallen.", Dolohov drawled while his smirk was in place.

"You..."

Dumbledore and Harry managed to slip out unnoticed as everyone outside had taken the floor to dance the night away and the Death Eaters were busy dissing each other.

Dumbledore held Harry's arm but she felt eyes on her and somehow

managed to choke back her scream. Sirius was looking right at her as they apparated away.

Oh lord, what if he figured something was wrong?

Chapter 18

" I had the weirdest dream.", Sirius said with a pursed lips

James nodded and said as he popped an apple piece in his mouth, "Dance war with Dumbledore?"

"What..no. And to be clear, I absolutely wiped the floor with my moves.", Sirius said with cocky grin.

"That's why it's a dream. ", Harry said sarcastically as she patted hurt Sirius

"You wound me, my love. But I will dazzle you with my moves one day.", Sirius promised with a smirk

Harry chuckled and started to eat her ice cream.

James grinned seeing Harry this lively. There was lightness and spark in her since the Christmas Party. Her steps had slight spring in them, her eyes were less burdened and she sat straighter now. Not like someone who was carrying weight of thousand regret and pain. She still refused to speak about her time in captivity or about her parents but she was getting better. The recovery road would be long and hard but James was going to support her till there was a breath left in him.

"So what was the weird dream?", Remus prodded Sirius

Sirius, who was staring at Harry (apparently trying to learn the art of eating), gulped and made a weird throaty sound.

A blissful Harry was licking the dripping ice cream off her fingers. Sirius's eyes were rivetted on Harry as he started to get flushed.

"What..? Oh, right yeah.", Sirius mumbled distractedly

They all waited for him to start the story. Instead of speaking or even looking at them, Sirius made a chocking noise as he continued to catalog Harry's eating style.

James tilted his head to understand what the hell happened in that dream to make Sirius so flustered.

"Didn't know you liked this flavor this much, Harry? You have literally licked your fingers clean.", Lily teased Harry

Harry simply grinned like a child as she sucked the melting ice cream off her thumb. Sirius pulled his robe to a side as if he was suddenly very hot and needed some cool air. He, then proceeded to chug a whole glass of orange juice.

"Did you forget the dream?", Peter asked annoyed at Sirius

Sirius didnt seem to have heard Peter. Sirius, suddenly, leaned towards Harry and put a hair strand that was annoying Harry behind her ears.

Alice and Lily squealed softly and James turned to look at them in question. Remus chuckled as if he understood something that James didn't.

Why was everyone acting so weird today?

"Oi, are you just gonna leave us hanging here?", James asked with slight edge

Sirius, whose fingers still lingered on Harry's cheek, broke the eye contact with Harry and straightened up. He coughed and visibly put some distance between Harry and him.

Sirius started his narration in a slow, lower voice,

"We were all dancing the night away on the Christmas party. Harry, Prongs and I were celebrating that absolute smacking of Bella, when something caught my eyes. It was someone with long dark hair, gorgeous dress but this person was covered in blood and was carrying a sword. She turned back as if pulled by my curiosity. The badarse girl was none other than our lovely Harry, covered in blood from head to toe."

Harry was sitting rigid, pale as Bloody Baron and her eyes, which were brimming with life a second ago, became opaque. Sirius looked deep in her eyes and James could see Harry's nervous tick, she was unconsciously tapping her fingers on her legs.

"I tried to call out to her. If she needed my help or if she was going on adventure, I wanted to tag along. I wanted to keep her safe, not that she couldn't do it on her own but I wanted to support her."

Sirius whispered and James could clearly imagine the scenario. Harry was getting some color back at least.

"Before I could ask her, she vanished in thin air as if some invisible force came and took her away. The party raged around me and my voice got lost in the loud sound. My heart fell to my feet wondering if Harry was gone from my life forever. Someone came and placed their hand on my shoulder. I turned and a relieved breath left my body. The hand belonged to none other than our stunning Harry. Harry, who was not covered in blood, sweat and horror but who outshone everyone with her bright smile. "

Harry, who was turning redder, as Sirius stared at her with his puppy eyes and softest smile.

"O*h my word!*", Lily awed whisper reached him.

Harry's unreadable expression turned soft as she smiled gently at Sirius.

"Harry asked me to dance. She twirled me around and dipped me like a pro. Then the night just flew by and I woke up with the biggest smile.", Sirius ended the story softly as he gently squeezed Harry's hand.

Harry shyly grinned back.

"*Harry* dipped *you*? The king of dips and fancy dance?", Peter asked loudly as he stared at Sirius befuddled.

Sirius started as if just realizing that there were others in the room as well.

"I like to be dined and wooed too, Wormtail.", Sirius said with waggling eyebrows

"Yes, he is a delicate flower. He withers in lack of attention.", Remus said helpfully.

"But why was my sister covered in blood?", James inquired.

Harry went still as she eyed Sirius carefully. Sirius gave her a mysterious smile.

"Yes, why covered in blood? Why not in flowers? ", Harry asked animatedly

James tilted his head again as he took in Harry's reaction. It was an odd reaction to a fairly decent dream of Sirius's. Her look was almost

calculating as if she was trying to decipher if Sirius's dream had an ulterior motive.

Sirius said roguishly , "Oh, love! When you and flower appear together in my dream, *trust me*, bloody images are far from the scene."

Harry blushed deep red as she coughed.

"I would admit you do scream in them but it's always in pleasure.", Sirius said with a wicked smile, which James knows had made girls swoon at his feet

Sirius gagged as James sprayed his mouth with water.

"I am trying to eat, Padfoot.", James said as wrinkled his nose.

Lily sighed, sitting opposite him. James couldn't figure out what was making Lily look so wishful. Lily caught James's confused look as she straightened up with a wry smile. Lily's cheeks also started to redden.

Was the temperature high in this room? Was he unwell? Why is that he was feeling decently comfortable, while everyone else seem to get bouts of hotness?

"So was I. ", Sirius said with devilish smirk as Harry resembled a rotten tomato now.

James managed to not empty his stomach content on Sirius at the image popped in his head but he did slap Sirius on back of his head. This boy needed to be disciplined.

"Oi! Captain! Aren't you guys going for the class?", Mary voice broke through the bubble they were all sitting

Harry cleared her throat and said with a interesting shade of red still gracing her face," Umm...before we go to class. Sirius, I know you said no gifts ever from me but umm.... I got you something. "

"Harry, you don't ever need to gift me anything. Your trust and friendship are more than enough.", Sirius said seriously as took Harry's hand in his.

Harry still blushing at the intensity that was flowing from Sirius, said softly, " But it would make me happy, if you would accept the gift."

Sirius sighed dramatically and said, "Well in that case, where is it?"

Sirius looked around like an excited puppy and started to crane his neck to search the gift he *didn't* want. He looked at Harry expectedly like a child on Christmas morning.

A broad grin spilt Harry's face and she motioned them to follow her. She ledthem to an abandoned classroom.

"TADA!", Harry announced excitedly as she pointed to some broken pipes and muggle machines pieces.

"*Umm*?", Sirius hesitated as he tried to make sense of the gift.

Harry started to ramble, "These are muggle motorcycle parts. Well, spare parts. I thought you would like to create your own from scratch and add new features. I even got you a books that would guide you on how to reconstruct a bike. If you don't want to assemble a bike but straight want to ride the bike, then I can get you that too. Do you have a brand that you like or uff"

Harry was smothered into silence by Sirius's bear hug.

James never thought be would ever witness a day when Sirius Black would be at loss for words. But he was, the orator who would slay the best speakers in moments, absolutely overcome with emotions. James decided to not mention the tear that dropped from Sirius's eyes into Harry's hair. Sirius had such few good memories, James would be damned if he spoilt this one by teasing.

Harry laughed softly as Sirius started to excited flip through the book and check the parts.

Harry cleared her throat. Sirius looked up in confusion when a rose was thrust in front of his eyes.

"For being you and a belated birthday gift.", Harry answered Sirius's questioning look.

Sirius reached to take the rose as if spellbound. James snickered. There he was, the mighty, heartbreaker Sirius Black, blushing an impressive shade of beetroot. James didn't think anyone has the power to stun Sirius the way Harry could.

"Thanks, Harry.", Sirius said breathily.

Harry smiled warmly at Sirius, who was reverently tracing the contour of the rose. Sirius gave her a blinding smile and fiercely hugged her.

"Thank you.", Sirius whispered overwhelmed

"For you, *always*.", Harry said with heavy emotion

James smiled seeing his brother get love and appreciation he deserved.

Sirius tenderly traced Harry's face. There was a reverence in the way Sirius was looking at Harry. Like he would burn the world and use the ash to create sculpture of Harry, if she so much as hinted she wanted that. There was a silent promise in the air that Sirius would die before he let a hair be harmed of Harry. Harry was smiling brightly at Sirius, as if seeing him smile and free, healed a tortured part of her soul.

James felt slight uneasy seeing them together like that. Like a couple. Like a real couple. Not the pretend couple.

If he was being honest with himself, they have always been like this. Even before it was found that Harry is related to Sirius, Sirius was intrigued by Harry. The care and protectiveness that Sirius felt for Harry, may be partially because Harry was James's sister and anything James's loved automatically got Sirius's protection. But James suspects that even if that wasn't the case, Sirius would have been exactly like this with Harry. In fact he suspects, if Harry wasn't related to him they would have been way further in their relationship.

James found that he didn't find this thought of them as a real couple that off-putting. Sirius was fiercely loyal and loving person, who would fight till death for the person he loved. Harry needed someone like that in her life. Someone who would fight by her side but also make her want to live freely. And Sirius needed someone who could ground him and make him want to lead a good, healthy life.

Would it be such a bad thing if they did become a real couple?

James knew that, unfortunately, this society will not let Harry live in peace. If Harry had to be someone for life, then James would prefer it's Sirius. Since James would have to spend lifetime with whoever Harry chose as well.

Two people he loved more than himself would get married and be happy together. *His best friend and his sister.*

What more can he want?

James cleared his throat and Sirius visibly, painfully, pulled himself

away from Harry. Sirius shuffled on his feet awkwardly.

James grinned. He could have fun with this.

"Alright there mate?", James asked Sirius cheekily, who nodded vigorously

"I think we should all go out to party today after our classes and practice", James said to the group at large.

General murmur of agreement rang around the group. James grinned as Sirius was trying and failing to keep his eyes off Harry.

"We would be late for Herbology.", Lily said as she started to walk out of the abandoned classroom.

Sirius took the book Harry had gifted as they trotted on towards the class.

James frowned, where had Peter sneaked off to? James can't remember if Peter actually came with them to this classroom or not. By the day Peter was getting stranger and stranger.

James grinned as Sirius gave Harry a chocolate on their way to class.

James Potter can say one thing for sure, his life is never dull.

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

> Thank you all for your patience. The past few weeks have been crazy. Hope you like the below. :)

"Padfoot, how much longer are you going to groom yourself?", Peter asked annoyed

"Eat it, Wormtail!", Sirius replied with a bird

"Yeah, Wormtail! You know it takes Padfoot atleast an hour to make himself presentable.", Remus said from his bed as he settled in more comfortably.

"I am *hungryyy*!", Peter moaned.

James threw him a bag of cookies as he watched the once in lifetime show.

Sirius Black's nervous breakdown over a *party get up.*

James watched in amusement as Sirius kept changing his clothes. Some made him look faded, others were apparently not his color(*then why does he have them?),* some didnt showcase his best assets and some showed way too much of him.

None of the combinations were apparently right. James stretched on his bed, enjoying the once in a lifetime experience. The pile of clothes around Sirius area kept rising.

James didnt even know Sirius *had* these many clothes.

That fucker had been forever stealing James's clothes to wear!

"Hey Harry, why dont you help Sirius decide what to wear?", Moony said cheekily to air.

Sirius skipped a step and almost fell down in process of changing his jeans for the hundredth time. Moony laughed evilly.

"Haha, sod off.", Sirius dismissed them with a rude gesture making the rest of boys laugh in amusement.

James wondered if Sirius was aware of how deep his feelings for Harry really was. James doubts Sirius is fully aware but atleast he is aware of some of it or this panic fashion show would not be happening.

Should I just tell Sirius that he is deeply in love with my sister?

Nahh..where was fun in that?

"So...what's the plan for tonight?", James asked casually

"What do you mean? ", Sirius asked flabbergasted as he threw a neon blue jacket away in disgust.

"What is the plan for tonight?", James repeated again but with a slight undertone to his question

Sirius paused in his appraisal of how his butt looked in way too tight skinny jeans that showed his *ass*ets way too much in James's opinion. Sirius stared at James comprehending that tonight they were going out with others and Harry was his *intended*.

"We will have fun.", Sirius said as he gave him a meaningful look

James nodded as he understood that Sirius would let things go as they naturally do but remain respectful.

"You know it is surprisingly how respectful Padfoot is with Harry.", Peter mused as he made his way through the cookies

"What do you mean?", James asked sharply

"Come on, Sirius never cared if he snogged, or even made out, in public. Yet here he is, never even kissed Harry on lips in front of anyone.", Peter explained as if surprised no one has picked up on it yet

"Its *Harry*.", Sirius answered as if it answered everything.

Sirius picked a blue jeans and white shirt and looked at Moony, who nodded. Sirius grinned and wore the jeans while he steam ironed his shirt using magic. Mom had always made them clean up their own messes at home. It certainly helped in such *stressful* situations.

James rolled his eyes at the vanity that possesses Sirius Black. He had chosen that exact combination as his first choice but then rejected it to have an hour long fashion panic.

"Yeah but...its your *intended*. Like its authorized by *both* your parents. So why be so respectful and prude?", Peter asked curiously

"She is my intended, Wormtail. What is the rush? We have a lifetime to know each other and be with each other.", Sirius said nonchalantly as he gave final touches to his hair.

"And *you* are fine with *one* girl for *rest of your life?*", Peter asked flabbergasted

Sirius straightened up and looking dead into Peter's eyes, said," Yes."

James paused in his comment of how Padfoot cannot be tamed at the seriousness that came from Sirius. That *Yes* was all the proof James needed that there would be no better suitor for his dear sister. One that is loyal to a fault and viciously protective of those he considers his own.

His sister and his best friend!

"I thought it was *girls* who took ages to get dresses.", Lily's teasing voiced floated into their room.

"Oh.."

Harry gasp joined in at the same time. Sirius froze mid movement while grabbing his shirt.

Harry was flushing rapidly as her eyes refused to see anything other than Sirius, *half naked*. While Sirius seem to have forgotten his condition as his eyes trailed Harry's look for the night. James felt a bit uncomfortable at witnessing the intense sexual tension between his best friend and his sister. But if it does work out, it would be the best thing for him!

James grinned. It seemed the fire was equal on both sides.

So he would ignore the feeling of needing to smash Sirius into a pulp and focused on how pretty Lily looked in her white colored dress. James signed at the loveliness and beauty Lily was spreading just by being here. It made her look like those angels in muggle books. James felt longing in his heart for Lily like a physical presence.

James took a deep breath to calm himself after actually noticing what Harry was wearing. Had Sirius not been courting Harry, James would have to spend the whole night shielding Harry from lusting arseholes.

Harry looked drop dead gorgeous with her short dress with a skirt thing and simple white top.

Peter whistled in appreciation for the girls, who blushed

"*Now*, that's some way to cause a riot!", Peter said with a weird smile

"*Peter*!", Lily whined

"Come on! You two look hella hot! The boys will be fighting tooth and nail to get even a chance to just speak with either of you.", Remus explained gently

"Does this look wrong?", Harry asked tentatively as she nervously pulled on her mini skirt.

Before James could reassure his sister, Sirius reached her with a gorgeous bouquet.

"You look absolutely eternal today, my love.", Sirius said with honey coated sincere voice.

Harry relaxed and took the bouquet with a shy smile. She paused in process of smelling the bouquet.

"Did a tornado go through here?", Harry asked baffled

"*No*!", Sirius panicked and with one wave of his wand, cleaned the entire room.

"Its process of Sirius Black grooming.", Remus smirked

"Its *not!*", Sirius refuted the claim in high pitched voice.

"Hola boys! Is everyone ready to *partyyyyy*?", Marlena excited voice prevented the onset of a long argument between Remus and Sirius

"We have been ready for past hour. Sirius is in the process of unearthing every cloth item he can find and try them on.", Remus japed

"We didnt know he had *those* many clothes!", James added helpfully

Sirius ignored them both and smiled at Harry. He proceeded to raise Harry's hand and kiss on her palm. Harry looked mesmerized at Sirius.

"Shall we, my lady?", Sirius bowed down in courtesy

"Are we going to see a gentlemen Sirius tonight?", Marl asked Sirius roguishly

"Or are you two finally going to break shackles and have fun like a normal couple.", Alice said suggestively

"Ah my love, its sad to see that the most talented and brilliant people have to hide their kinks like this.", Sirius said with a mad glint in his eyes

"*Kinks*?", Alice asked skittishly

"Voyeurism, my lovely Alice.", Sirius said with wolfish smile as Alice squeaked

"Hey! There is no need for you folks to corrupt my sister. Padfoot is already too corrupted to have any hope of redemption.", James said jokingly

Sirius tensed on that statement and looked at Harry warily.

James sighed.

Of course, this tosser would take it to mean James doesn't approve of the relationship.

James would repair this misbelief some other time. Right now, it was time to PARTYY!

"Alright, let the night begin!", Remus said cheerfully as he started to lead everyone downstairs.

"You look really wonderful, Lily.", James complimented her sincerely as they found themselves at the door

Lily stumbled a bit and a wonderful red tinge made her even more gorgeous. James grinned at her playfully as Lily smiled in thanks. James wonders why everyone else was snickering.

"Oi, *dolt*! Let's go!", James barked at Sirius who was visibly drooling at Harry's backless back.

James was fine with them being in relationship but he was not fine with Harry being subjected to leering.

"SHOTSS!", Mary screamed as soon as they entered the pub.

They all started chanting and chugging alcohol as if alcohol would be banned from morning.

The night was blurry and his feet needed to massaged the hell out next morning. He didn't think he has ever danced this much ever before.

Sirius and Harry looked so blissfully happy in each others presence as they danced the night away. James felt happiness in him as he saw the most important people in his life leave their burdens, guilt and sadness behind, and find peace and happiness in each other. He remembers watching Harry and Sirius dance pressed against each other in an extremely sexual manner. It may or may not have triggered James's puke.

He remembers vividly when Lily and he danced together on a song. Her eyes are so captivating and beautiful. Her smile can light up the world. He can still feel the softness of her skin in his hand. He remembered embarrassingly enough that she was the one who took care of him when he puked. She didn't make him feel bad or low about it but pulled him to the dance floor the moment he felt better. He thinks he told her 'she is the most amazing person he has ever had a chance of meeting'.

Did she kiss him on his cheek in response?

Is that why his cheeks feel as if they were kissed by fire?

His heart is summersaulting just thinking about the hazy kiss as butterflies take permanent residence in his stomach.

If only something more could happen.

James knew he has messed up big time last year. He knew Lily would never want to be with someone who was a bully and harassed people for fun. At least, she has granted him her friendship. That is still more than what he had expected. He will not shatter everything he has now, in greed of more.

He woke up to find Sirius and Remus both mushed in his bed with him. James managed to untangle himself as he, somehow, stumbled his way towards the bathroom. He would wake these snoring dolts once he has gained some sense. He thinks they may have classes today.

Well that was one hell of a party!

Chapter 20

"You sure, you are okay Harry? You have been distracted since morning.", Lily asked in growing concern

"I am fine, Lily.", Harry said with barely there smile

"You can talk to me. I may not be able to relate but you can still tell me. I am here for you. Always will be.", Lily implored Harry with as much passion, concern and love she could infuse in her words.

Harry's eyes started to go misty as her face contracted into a wistful longing. She grasped Lily's arm and squeezed it in assurance.

"I am really fine, Lily. Diggory family's murder stirred few buried memories is all. I know I scared you with my screaming last night. The nightmare was ... but I am as fine as I can be at the moment. I am very sorry for hurting you guys last night.", Harry said with a watery smile

Lily felt her heart contract in pain and hugged Harry with everything in her. Pouring out all the love, support and strength into Harry to take some consolation and strength.

Harry had been screaming worse than Bloody Baron for good while in middle of night. None of them were able to get to her because of the charms she had placed on her bed. Mary had been unable to find boys to come help Harry.

After huge effort and using all their collective knowledge, Lily and Alice were finally able to break through the protective barrier and reach Harry. The moment they touched Harry, her magic blasted them all on their arses. McGonagall had come blasting in the room. Took one look and somehow managed to wake Harry.

Lily will never forget the pain that went through her at the lost, helpless look Harry had. Pain and loss were carved on Harry's face. Harry met Lily's eyes and broke down in heart wrenching sob. McGonagall had taken Harry to Dumbledore once she had calmed down slightly.

Harry came back at break of dawn and profusely apologised to all the girls. They all tried to console her and make her feel better. But she had been absentminded and lost. The bloody boys were nowhere to be

found. Lily felt so helpless and powerless to help her dear friend.

Harry hugged her back and shudder ran through her. Harry had a very peculiar expression on her face when they parted as if Harry was taking a solemn oath. That looks scared Lily more than the nightmarish experience last night. It was a look that screamed 'fuck with her, fuck with me.'.

They both gave each other small smiles and turned towards the entry of Herbology hut, only to stop dead.

Lily tilted her head slightly as she analyzed the peculiar situation in front of them.

James was standing in front of the Herbology hut with junched shoulders, hands in pockets, looking everywhere but at the rest of Marauders. The Marauders all had varying degree of disbelief and horror on their faces as they stared at James.

"Are you lot okay?", Lily asked with concern

James flushed slightly as he saw them. He removed his glasses and started to clean them with his robe.

"Are you... *hurt*?", Harry whispered as she analyzed each boy for injury.

James shook his head in negative. The rest of the boys watched in fascination as if enthralled by a once in lifetime experience.

James cleared his throat as Harry started to get anxious.

"We are fine, love.", Sirius said in soothing voice

Lily bit her sigh as she saw Sirius's eyes got lighter seeing Harry. Harry stared at Sirius to detect any lie and then her tense shoulders dropped as she gave Sirius a small smile.

"Traumatized for life but physically fine.", Remus said as shiver went through him

"I was *both* Traumatized and physically hurt!", Peter grumbled

"What happened?", Harry asked with slight edge in her tone.

"Have you ever seen shredding of antlers?", Remus asked deadpanned as he gave a look at Harry

Harry whipped her head towards beetroot James. Harry's eyes filled with mirth and her lips twitched.

"Wait.. doesnt the shredding happen in March? Its only December?", Lily asked in confusion

"Our antler was an early shedder.", Remus said with straightface

"To be fair, he has never really been able to last long.", Sirius said with humor dancing in his eyes.

Lily stared at them and asked in confusion," Your antler?"

Harry, on the other hand, started to laugh. Her peel of laughter warmed her heart. Aftet last few hours, it warmed Lily to see Harry this happy.

James looked as if he wasnt sure if he should happy that Harry was dying in mirth or a bit embarrassed for what Lily had no clue. James settled on wry smile and fond eyes.

"One from my herd.", Remus said casually

Lily shrugged it off. It wasnt the oddest thing about their group. It was a known fact in the school that Remus was something of an animal whisperer. Remus actually did bring a stag in the dorm once.

"Do you think he shed the balls too?", Peter asked as he stared in horrified fascination at James

"No, he did not!", James gritted out

Harry, who had just controlled her laughter, again doubled down.

"Are you sure? The stag did bolt in absolute panic when he shred the antlers.", Remus asked in concern as his eyes danced in mirth

"Yeah, maybe they dropped like jingle bells on the forest floor.", Sirius added thoughtfully

"Sod off!", James said angrily.

"Why are you getting offended for the stag?", Lily asked James in confusion

The rest chuckled or in Harry's case, crackled.

"Well someone has to. The poor stag had to go through this when he was around these fuckers.", James muttered and walked into the Herbology hut.

Lily stared at him befuddled. Sirius went after James ad he winked at Harry. Harry giggled.

"What was that?", Lily asked super confused

"You know how they call James Prongs because his hair reminds Remus of antlers. ", Harry explained as a snort reached them.

"Lily, come on! It's Herbology !!",l

At Alice's yell, it might be better she doesn't know whatever these Marauders are upto.

They all went to the hut to see their grouping for the class.

James snickered as mud flew all over the place. He made eye contact with Remus, who was barely holding his laughter.

Sirius was angrily murdering the soil that he was supposed to be tending to 'gently'. Sirius anger and intensity of stabbing *surprisingly* increased with every smile and laugh Harry graced a smitten Kingsley.

Harry had been partnered with Kingsley and Lily, on the other side of the table. Harry was merrily chatting with Kingsley with a fond smile and nostalgic eyes.

"Ah, I must have missed the instructions of butchering the roots to make the plant give us it's healing sap.", James said jokingly

Sirius didn't seem to have heard his amazingness or was ignoring him. Serves him right for needling James endlessly for the shredding process.

James rolled his eyes and sprayed Sirius with some refreshing water to cool the rising temperature.

"*Kshshdjs*... what in the Merlin's sagging balls, Prongs?", Sirius spluttered

"Thought you might need some refreshment.", James said innocently

"Are we sure he has the balls?", Peter muttered beside him.

James and Sirius's retort was lost as Harry's laugh floated towards them.

"*I. Am. Fine.*", Sirius gritted as he went back to slaughtering the poor plant with more vigor.

"They make a cute couple. ", Remus said to be a little shit.

Sirius glared at angelic smiling Remus. James suppressed his mirth ruthlessly.

Remus ducked as soil flew towards him.

"*Tsk. Tsk*. So much anger, Padfoot.", Remus said mockingly

"Bugger off.", Sirius said as he flicked him a finger

"If you are so bothered, why don't you march there and make your claim? She *is* your intended, after all.", Peter chimed in confused

Sirius's anger leaked out of him. He went back to tending to his plant, more gently than before.

"Because she is her own person.", Sirius said softly

"Well, we can always jinx Kingsley.", Peter said supportively

Sirius shook his head and said resigned, "No, we wont."

"Why?", Peter asked perplexed

"Because he makes her happy. I can't destroy anything that makes her happy. ", Sirius explained grudgingly

Peter's mouth dropped on the floor as he stared at Sirius. Sirius Black, who would have cursed Kingsley few months ago mercilessly, was been benevolent for his love.

James grinned and slapped Sirius's back in appreciation of growth in his restraint and character.

James sighed as he realized Sirius would not do anything about their insanely-sexual-tension-in-denial filled relationship till given explicit permission by James. These two's sexual tension was making his life uncomfortable and miserable too.

"And that's why at end of day, you are the one she seeks.", James whispered to Sirius

Sirius whipped his head up to see Harry smile brightly at him. Sirius smiled brightly back at her. Happiness was glowing out of him as he basked in Harry's attention.

Sirius breathed in deeply as he seem to gather his courage. He turned towards James, who was expecting his question.

Sirius paused and whispered angrily," You *knew* and you didnt tell me?"

"Where is the fun in that?", James muttered as he chuckled

Sirius mumbled few choice word on where James could put his fun. Then seem to realize what was actually happening.

Sirius mumbled tentatively, " You dont ..*huh*... mind if I actually pursue relationship with her?"

"If you are honest and give it your absolute best, then no. I have absolutely no issue with you two genuinely courting.", James said with a knowing smile.

Sirius grin could have lit the room. Sirius hugged the lights out of James.

"Isnt he courting her already?", Peter asked them in wonder

"Of course he is. ", James defended quickly

"Sirius was asking permission to canoodle with James's sister.", Remus said with mad smile.

James choked but swallowed the vehement protest at the image that sentence created. Sirius grinned wickedly at James's expression.

James prayed to whoever was watching them to not look back at this moment and regret it. Watching Sirius walk with spring in his steps, he had a feeling he would end up regretting giving his blessing.

James decided to hit library to find noise cancelling spells to preserve his peace and not murder Sirius.

Chapter 21

Harry knew her past *(pasts?)* would come back to haunt her. She just never expected it to be here and definitely never expected it to have such a visceral response.

Deep breathes, Harry.

Hermione coached her through the panic attack which was threatening to overtake her senses. Harry slammed her eyes shut as she started to get overwhelmed with her past bombarding her.

Her dad and Sirius, untainted, happier and younger selfs, crowded her vision in their attempt to soothe her and bring her back to reality.

Except it was making everything more real and panic inducing.

She had to save them.

She *had* to make sure that they are able to live the lives they were meant to. She *cannot..will not* let her parents die before their time and neither let Sirius waste most of his life suffering for a crime he could never commit. She will not allow herself to live life of loss, pain and suffering.

But... *how*?

Lord *fucking* Voldemort has still not put the bloody goddammit locket in that cave of her nightmares.

As far as Dumbledore and she are aware, Voldemort hasnt created any surprise horcrux either. As they continued to wait for the bloody horcrux to arrive, people were dying around her and she was enjoying her life.

The guilt of not paying much attention to past in her past life is eating her. She never bothered to learn about her past because her present was just one horror after another. Now that lack of knowledge is costing people their lives here.

Pull it together, mate. You fought a dragon. You bloody did everything in your power.

Oh, how she *wished* it was not just Ron's voice echoing in her head but actually him, here with her.

You have the chance to make the world better, Harry.

Hermione chimed in her head.

Why is she here alone? She never faced challenges alone! She *always* had them with her. She is just so alone and lost here without these two. She is not sure she won't mess up because her two guiding stats are no longer with her to guide her.

She can face her past and all the horrors thrown at her. She can very well manage her current present and the complexity it brings. She will fight like hell for the better future. She just never expected to be face to face with the past, present and future, all together in one go like this.

Lord, have mercy on her!

Harry felt shiver wreak her frame as her breathing went shallow and vision tunneled. Her mother's scream echoed through her skull while her father's lifeless eyes were etched behind her eyelids.

"Harry! Breathe, love!"

Sirius's soothing voice echoed, somewhere in the horizon. She desperately wanted to but it was a herculean task. But now Sirius's sunken face when they first met, joined the scream and lifeless eyes.

She was standing where her father was.. will be murdered. She was in the same foresaken house that started the dominos in her life. This bloody house which was the kick starter of a life full of loss, pain and suffering.

What if everything went to worse than before? What if she was not able to make it better?

Her mother's scream will not stop spilting her head and her father's dead eyes continued to torment her. Sirius's tired eyes broke Harry's heart.

She felt nauseated reliving all the heartbreaking memories...these painful reminders that were so clearly itched in her mind.

She started to hyperventilate as she realized that the reason her older self had any memory of her parents and their deaths was because she shared her soul with their murderer. She became the reason why Voldemort managed to murder so many innocents and her loved

ones.

She became the reason why killing him became an impossible task. The fact that she had to thank Voldemort for having any memory of her parents, made her brain shortcurcuit. Voldemort was the reason they were gone and he was the reason Harry had tangible proof of her parents' love for her.

The scream..screams (was someone else screaming?) was the last thing she remembers before everything went blissfully silent and dark.

"What *happened*?", Mother asked no one in particular.

Just a question to the universe. Her daughter, her strong, brave and resilent daughter had blacked out after having an intense panic attack. She was still not sure what triggered it.

Euphemia Potter was sure that Harry has never in her life stepped foot in that house or that city. Her reaction to house though said otherwise.

It was as if Harry was seeing ghosts that were haunting here as clear as the sun rose today. Her blood curling scream of pain and loss before she passed out, will haunt Euphemia till she was alive.

Her poor daughter had been through so much. Suffered losses and pain that no one in world should ever have go. Her eyes always carried the weight of her past. The regret clung to her like a turtleneck.

Euphemia wiped her tears as Harry started to move restlessly in her dreams. Fleamont whispered a spell and Harry fell back into a peaceful and, hopefully, happy slumber.

No one's dreams should be their haunting ground. It was one place where people should be able to imagine a world of kindness and happiness. The fact that her daughter had daily nightmares broke her heart.

James and Sirius were staring at Harry as if afraid she would vanish in a puff. Remus was sniffling as he kept an eye on Harry and the boys.

"Mrs Potter, did.. did Harry have any association with that place?", Remus's shaking voice reached her

"***No***! Harry has never even stepped foot there. I... don't know what could have triggered such a reaction in her.", her husband stood in agitation and guilt.

"Past can haunt us in ways we never imagined.", a calming voice said from the door.

"Professor Dumbledore!"

Exclamations sounded across the floor.

"Thanks, Euphemia for inviting me. If you guys don't mind, may i take a look at Harry?", Dumbledore requested politely.

Everyone scrambled away to give Professor the room. Euphemia couldnt bring herself to move. She didnt want her daughter to wake up cold and without a loving, physical assurance of support.

Dumbledore's hand rested lightly on Harry's forehead and a warmth flooded the room.

"Not too worry, my dears. Harry is physically alright. Something about Godric Hallows must have triggered her buried memories. She should be fine in no time.", Dumbledore said soothingly

"But why *now*?", James' anxiety burst through him

"She has been doing so well!", Sirius added desperately, as he patted Harry's hair

"Her nightmares frequency had reduced too.", Remus whispered as he moved closer to Harry.

"Mind is a funny thing. When they feel they are safe and relaxed, they tend to revisit the worst memories. Unfortunately for Harry, the range of her worst memories range far and wide.", Dumbledore said quietly as if staring into something only he could see.

"What could it be that triggered it?", James asked in helplessness

"We would make sure she never ever sees it again!", Sirius said in helplessness

Dumbledore placed his hand on the boy's shoulders to calm them down.

"Unfortunately, the possibilities are far and wide. It could be

something as simple as a laughter to something as vague as the house resembling one in her trauma. ", Dumbledore said sadly

"What can we do?", Euphemia asked desperately

"Be with her. Support her. Ask her to talk about it if she can. If she remembers and is willing to discuss what caused it, make sure it never happens again. But chances are, this will not be a one off event. ", Dumbledore said with a sad smile.

James sniffled. Sirius hugged him in support and for support.

"Welcome back, Harry.", Dumbledore said kindly

Harry eyed the room with blank face as she stared at Dumbledore as if reliving another memory. Dumbledore cleared his throat slightly bringing awareness back in Harry's eyes.

"That bad, huh?", Harry said wryly

"I am afraid so. How are you feeling, my dear?", Dumbledore asked

"As well as I can when bombarded by my past but I should be able to manage.", Harry said cryptically as she groaned moving her muscles

"That's expected. Well, I should let you get better. Howl, if you need me.", Dumbledore said merrily as Harry gave him a small smile.

"Sorry about that.", Harry said in small voice to the room at large.

"Hey, none of that.", Euphemia assured her as she squeezed her hand.

Harry stared at their joint hands and her eyes went watery.

"Honey, do you need something?", Fleamont asked her after hugging her

"Just your safety.", Harry mumered

"Harry..", James voice broke as he tried to control his emotions

Harry looked around the room and a realization dawned on her face.

"I am ...not fine. That house reminded me of the place we stayed when I was very young. It just opened the dam of nightmarish experiences.", Harry said in small voice as she cleared her throat

James and Sirius side hugged her in support. Fleamont choked back his sob as Euphemia squeezed Harry's hand in support.

"My mother's scream while she was being murdered was echoing in my head the whole time. While my father's lifeless eyes were staring at me.", Harry whispered as if still living that moment.

Euphemia squeezed her hand harder and saw her boys hugging Harry harder. Harry took a deep breath and gave them a wary smile.

"I have to come to terms with my past and present.", Harry said in determined tone.

Everyone gave her a supportive smile.

"Alright, let's give Harry some time to clean and get ready for dinner. Come on boys, help me set up the table.", Fleamont said as he kissed Harry on her forehead.

James, Sirius and Remus all hugged and kissed her on her forehead before going to set the table. Euphemia hugged Harry and cupped her lovely face in her palms.

Looking into Harry's eyes with love and passion, Euphemia said, "Honey, I will never try to replace your parents place in your life. But know that we would die for you without a second thought because you, my dear, are *mine. You are my daughter.* I may not have given birth to you but I am so privileged to call someone so brave, gentle, smart and lovely as *my own.*"

Harry teared up and hugged life out of Euphemia.

"I know. I know", Harry mumbled.

"Good. Now, take your time and come down when you feel like it.", Euphemia kissed Harry.

Euphemia turned to close gate to find Harry staring at a Galleon coin intensely. Harry looked up and met her eyes. Suddenly her look of trepidation changed into look of determination and acceptance.

Euphemia gave her a small, supportive smile and closed the door.

Why did her heart feel heavy? Why does her heart feel that Harry has just made a vow that would get her killed in the end?

She needs to speak with Dumbledore. He has to keep his daughter

safe!

If Euphemia had to fight Voldemort himself to keep her daughter, she will bloody well do that!

Chapter 22

"Harry, wait!", Dumbledore warning froze Harry in her place.

Dumbledore had a peculiar expression on his face as if his spider senses were blaring. Harry tried to see what Dumbledore might have triggered Dumbledore's danger signal. She couldn't figure it out.

The cave looked same as last time, minus the night time mystery. The sun was shining bright with warm wind blowing, which was helping with her freezing bones from their Artic ocean swim earlier.

Drying and warming spells were God sent and whoever discovered them should get a donut everytime someone used it.

Harry looked at the entrance of cave and could sense the dark spell, just chilling and protecting Voldemort's dearest. Auror training did help her in being more attuned to magic in her surrounding.

Clearly, she was not attuned enough.

"Professor?", Harry whispered

Dumbledore was staring at Harry with an expression that gave Harry flashback of that cursed night at tower when Dumbledore died. Harry took a step back, determined to participate in whatever came.

Harry was blinded by a green light. She was shocked to see Voldemort, leaning against the wall with an extremely creepy grin. If not for Dumbledore's protective shield, Harry was sure she would be dead or worse.

Harry got ready for the fight that was always coming when Voldemort appeared like this. Voldemort straighten up slowly. The Horcruxes have already started to transform his face into one that resembles his true self more.

Dumbledore stood in front of her, partially blocking her from Voldemort's view.

"Hello, Harriet. Its lovely to see you have your spirit intact. ", Voldemort said sweetly.

Harry felt goosebumps erupt as she sensed the danger behind her. Voldemort had sweetly called her full name, *Harriet*, as a taunt/

warning before torturing Harriet, when she was in his capture. No wonder Harry found 'Harriet' triggering now, than she did in her past life.

Something alerted her to danger behind her. She threw a protective shield behind her just as a spell hit it. She whipped back to Bellatrix stroding cheerfully towards them, swirling the wand gracefully in her hand.

Bellatrix grinned maniacally. Bellatrix muttered a spell and Harry understood there would be no escaping this fight. This was an ambush.

Voldemort knew they knew that they were screwed, his satisfied grin said so.

"Shouldn't you be out there clearing your name? Proving your blood purity?", Harry said trying to buy them some time.

Voldemort chuckled and said, "Thats where you are wrong, Harriet. People bend down to powerful, anything else doesnt matter."

"Is that why your followers have dwindled?", Harry challenged.

"They will come back crawling once I kill him.", Voldemort said sneeringly as he pointed at Dumbledore.

"How will they know it was you who killed him?", Harry asked pointedly

"I will tell them. ", Voldemort said as if it was obvious

"Or i could just say i killed you both. ", Harry said with a wide grin as a crazy idea started to form in her head.

Voldemort and Bellatrix started to laugh. Harry grabbed Dumbledore's arm.

"Harry we cant apparate. I tried the moment we did the drying spells. ", Dumbledore whispered patiently.

"That's why *we* wont be apparting, Professor. ", Harry said with a wild grin that used put Hermione on guard.

Dumbledore's eyes sparkled as he understood her meaning.

"Hope!", Harry yelled

"Already losing your marbles, Potter.", Bellatrix taunted

Harry grinned at her as Hope, the Potter house elf, popped up. Voldemort shrieked and stumbled over his own legs and started to fight his robe. Bellatrix froze where she stood. Dumbledore gave Harry a sheepish grin.

"Its best not to tell the Marauders group that their spells saved us in life threatening situation, just to prevent their ego from over inflating.", Dumbledore said with childish smile.

Harry chuckled as she requested Hope to take them to the lake. Voldemort screamed as the robe kept him busy.

"Alright Harry, i will drink the potion and .."

Dumbledore started to give instructions moment they reached the well.

"Can we try something else before we drink that horrid potion?", Harry requested politely as she pulled out a very cute Niffler out of her bag.

Dumbledore booming laugh filled the lake and sent ripples and shock wave across the lake. Niffler got super excited and started to dig, while Harry and Dumbledore freed the poor souls trapped as inferi in the lake.

Niffler came out with the locket and grinned. Dumbledore gave Harry a you-so-mad-I-am-more-proud-than-ever look. Dumbledore distracted the Niffler from the locket and darkness while Harry took the sword out.

The lake started to churn and they could see Voldemort furiously trying to break his own spells down.

Harry whispered open in parseltongue.

Before the lake, horcrux Voldemort or actual Voldemort could get them, Harry swung the sword and ended his sad piece of soul.

They dropped the locket in the well again, where it sizzled as it sunk to the floor of the well. Dumbledore did some fancy wand work and then with Hope's help, they apparated back to Hogwarts.

After profusely thanking Hope and requesting her to not tell anyone

about unless asked by a family member, they bid her adieu.

"I think we need to prepare for attack, Professor. ", Harry said seriously.

"That we have to but i have to say i am impressed by your ingenuous ideas.", Dumbledore praised Harry.

"Thank you, Professor. I did have a lot of time to rethink of how i would have approached situations if they were presented again. Never thought that it would actually be helpful.", Harry said bittersweetly

Dumbledore chuckled, " Life has a funny way of going its own way. Some horrid and some blessed. "

"Professor.."

"You are right, we need to start preparing. Now that Voldemort is aware of the situation and our hand in it, he would not hestitate to attack. Though i doubt it would be today. He would need some planning. So I give it a week.", Dumbledore said pleasantly as he offered her tea.

"What should I do?", Harry asked fired up.

This was it. The end was near and she could feel it.

"Relax. Enjoy time with your loved ones. And maybe subtly try to prepare them for the oncoming slaughter. In meantime, I have asked staff to come up. We will draw a contingency plan.", Dumbledore said as he hummed and whistled some song.

Harry nodded and then hestitated.

"Yes Harry?", Dumbledore asked her patiently

"If Voldemort knew someone was casing the cave, why did he still go ahead with the planting the horcrux there? He could have planted it anywhere? Why take the risk?", Harry asked confused

"Ah, Harry. You are thinking as a cautious person. Voldemort doesn't think anyone is smart enough to detect what he is doing or do through his defenses. He definitely didn't think we two would be able to beat him *and* Bellatrix in a battle to get to the Locket. It his ego that handicaps him.", Dumbledore explained with a smile

Harry nodded and bid him adieu.

She felt lighter. It was just a fight now. The rest of it was over. The only question remaining was whether Voldemort might, in haste, create another horcrux.

"***RUN***!"

Harry had time to utter some gibberish along the lines of 'what in the holy motherfuckery is going on' before she was dragged along by Sirius.

She muttered few spells as they ran to incapacitate their chasers. She was so distracted in ensuring a distracted opponent that when Sirius pulled her into an empty classroom and slammed the door, Harry's only response (logical too in her opinion), was to shriek in surprise.

Sirius placed his hand on her face to quitened her down. Harry stared at Sirius and started to calm down. Sirius slowly lowered his hand and softly trailed it upward her face, tucking her hair back. The path Sirius's hand took started a fire in her, which she had been ignoring venemously.

Sirius rubbed her ear affectionately while his other hand rubbed circles on the inner arm. Harry's legs almost buckled, which was stopped as Sirius readjusting his leg so that it was jammed between her legs.

Harry gulped and then her eye's became impossibily wide as she felt something else of Sirius come alive on her thighs. Harry's eyes dropped to his luscious lips and then back to his storming dark grey vibes.

Sirius's hand, which was on her ear, slipped into her hair, as he started to eliminate all space between them. Harry gulped as her eyes dropped back to his lips and licked her lips. Sirius moaned at her action and lightly brushed her lips with his, making her breath itch.

"Harry..", Sirius whisper filled with want was her undoing as she launched herself at him. She kissed him with all her worth, frustration and need piled into one. Sirius stumbled a bit at her enthusiasm but then quickly matched her.

She was suddenly pressed between two hard things, the wall and well, Sirius. She moaned as Sirius tongue explored her mouth expertly while his leg pressed just right against her growing wetness. She

started to seek fiction as Sirius deepened the kiss. His other hand, softly trailed from her arm to her waist to her back to end at her hair.

Harry moved closer to him and pulled few of his ridiculously soft hair. Sirius moaned and lifted her up with one hand, the other was still in her hair. This move got Harry incredibly turned on.

Harry was placed on a table and Sirius left her mouth and started trailing kisses to her neck.

Harry started mewling. Sirius growled at that as he started to disrobe her in urgency. Sirius flattered when Harry started trace his amazing abs and slowly inched lower.

Sirius pulled back and removed his robe in one go, leaving him in only pants. Harry eyes were rivetted to his abs and she bite her lips, making Sirius groan again. He pulled her back in a smoothering kiss which made Harry's toe curl.

Suddenly the door blasted open and Sirius whipped towards the danger in a snarl, ready to attack anyone who disturbed them.

Remus was standing there with a wide grin and James had his eyes covered.

"In a *classroom*!", James spluttered

Sirius sighed loudly and stood hiding Harry from others view. After quickly adjusted her clothes, Harry lightly touched Sirius's back to signal him she was alright. Shiver ran through Sirius at her touch as he clutched his hands hard as to regain some control. She was touched to see the effect she had on him.

"This is how you decide to woo my sister!", James grumbled with his eyes still closed.

"I dont think wooing was the center theme here, Prongs.", Remus said to adding oil the fire.

"I am decent, James.", Harry whispered

"Sadly", Sirius muttered.

Harry chuckled and kissed him lightly on the lips. Sirius deepened the kiss and Harry forgot that a world existed outside them.

"***Oi***!", James bellowed as Harry moaned into the kiss and Sirius

hummed in response.

They broke their kiss but Sirius still held her in her arms.

"I am understanding but lets not push it!", James warned them

Sirius nodded and reluctantly let go of Harry and made himself decent. Harry pouted seeing that. Sirius grinned wickedly back at her and winked a promise of more to follow. Harry blushed at that.

"What earthshattering thing happened, that you had to be a bloody cockblock?", Sirius asked James as they left the classroom.

"Oh, nothing. James sensed change in the weather and thought he should find you.", Remus said with shit eating grin.

"Fucker!", Sirius grumbled as he pulled Harry closer to him.

"Dumbledore wants to meet all the 5th year and above, now. So come on, you two can become humping rabbits later.", James grumbled as he gently asked her if she was fine.

Harry nodded with a blush.

"This is harder than I thought.", James muttered.

"It was few moments ago before you dumbshits barged in and decided to ruin it.", Sirius grumbled.

"Ew.. gross! Can I not think of you being hard with my sister!', James said revolted.

"Would you rather I not get hard for her?", shot back

"I... fuck off! Do have to be so crass all the time? Its my *sister*!!", James whined

"And she is my *intended*. My amazing, hot, strong and brilliant Intended! Ofcourse i am head over heels for her!", Sirius argued back

Harry blushed hard at that.

"Well treat her like a *lady*!", James demanded

"I was going to treat her like a lady, if you hadnt bragged in.", Sirius argued back.

"*You*..", James screamed looking above in frustration.

"Wait why were all running?", Harry asked Remus, who was walking with her leaving the black haired heirs to sort their ires out.

"Oh, we glued Professors to their chairs.", Remus said off-handedly

"Why?", Harry asked flabbergasted

"Oh , we wanted to see if we can do it for a period. We didnt feel like studying. ", Remus shrugged

"*You* didnt feel like studying?", Harry asked in shock

"I had free class, those two dipshits didnt.", Remus shrugged.

Harry tried to process this information. Remus was okay with skipping class. Her brother was fine with her relationship with Sirius.

And most importantly, she had a mind blowing makeout session with Sirius.

As if hearing her turn of thought, Sirius turned around and gave her a loaded look, full of promises and hunger.

Harry felt butterflies flutter in her stomach as her cheeks flamed up. James smacked Sirius head and they fell back into arguing. Harry and Remus chuckled.

They all stood waiting for Dumbledore in small Hall.

Sirius came and stood behind her, pressing his very alive hardness into her back, while his hands rested on hers. As teachers came in with a grim face, Sirius started to form pattern on her hand, while his breath on her neck caused goosebumps to erupt everywhere.

Harry gulped as she tried to pay attention to announcement she knew was coming. As Dumbledore cleared his throat, Harry bit back a gasp as Sirius bit her ear lightly.

This would be a long, wonderfully tortuous announcement for sure.

Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Harry, you are ignoring me!!", James pouted and stomped his feet with all his toddler spirit

"Huh? What?", Harry forced herself to bring back to the conversation and not get distracted *again* by Sirius arse.

"You are ignoring your favorite person!", James said petulantly.

"I am not, James. Sorry, what were you saying about the game?", Harry said sweetly to calm her irritated brother.

Harry didn't think her brother would appreciate that while he was rambling on, Harry was thinking about his best friend.

Harry was sure James would not appreciate to know how his best friend had ravished his little sister in their changing room after the Quidditch Cup win. Or how a wet and only towel clad Sirius had pulled Harry into a shower stall and consumed Harry's soul and body.

How his best friend had used his tongue and fingers to bring Harry to the edge repeatedly. So slowly that Harry would have told him anything to find the release. She definitely didn't think James would appreciate that Sirius had finally lifted her against the shower wall and taken her so hard and fast that she saw stars as her orgasms (yes, *plural*) wrecked her.

"I wasn't talking about the game!", James said annoyed

Harry tried to pull herself out of gutter and focus on her increasing frustrated brother.

"Umm...the party?", Harry stumbled in her guess as Sirius removed his robe and was in a tight fitting shirt and jeans. That attire should be made illegal. His shirt was unbuttoned on top and Harry's hands twitched too touch him.

James gave Harry an unimpressed look that screamed I-am-not-buying-what-you-are-selling. She knew she should focus on whatever

James wanted to talk about but all Harry could think about was Sirius and how Harry had reduced Sirius into begging mess as she swallowed him in the empty staircase just before the match.

Harry fanned herself a bit. Just thinking about the wicked things Sirius and Harry got up to, was making her hotter.

Sirius smirked as he realized who and *what* had Harry distracted. He sauntered towards Harry with a lazy grace. Harry gulped as Sirius filled her vision, sense and thoughts. Sirius claimed her mouth passionately and reverently in front of the whole house.

"*Oi*!!", James indignant yell broke their kiss but Sirius's arm didn't let Harry move an inch from her place.

Harry's thought scattered as Sirius's smell and presence filled her every thought and being. Sirius's chuckle sent a bolt of want through her body. Sirius lightly grabbed her arse as he moved her even closer to him. Harry's hand, somehow, found themselves inside Sirius's shirt, gently tracing his spine and abs. Sirius shivered as he looked at her with hunger and want, making Harry swallow a moan.

"Can you not paw on my sister every chance you get, like some horny dog?", James complained petulantly from somewhere near them.

"Well I was just following my Team's captain example to kiss the love of my life in front of everyone.", Sirius teased James as Lily choked on her drink.

Harry snickered.

After Harry had caught the snitch and won the Quidditch Cup, James had flown directly to Lily, screaming on stand, and kissed her on lips. The whole stadium had gone dead silent to see how Lily would react. Only for Lily to moan and pull James in for a deeper kiss. The whole school had erupted in cheers and money were exchanged across aisles.

"You...I ", James spluttered as he turned beetroot.

"I think he has a point, James. ", Lily said with a shy smile as she moved closer to him.

James turned into a melting puddle as he beamed at Lily and leaned down to kiss her again. Sirius took advantage of James's distraction to frisk Harry up to his dorm.

He shut the door and pressed Harry against his dorm's door. Harry could feel him come alive as Sirius started to pepper kisses along her neck and shoulder. Harry moaned and pulled him in for deep kiss that curled her toes. He pulled her robe off her.

He whined as he saw her a nice red strappy dress.

"You are so beautiful, Harry!" Sirius panted as his hand brushed Harry's breast.

Harry grinned.

She pushed back slightly and grabbed hold of his shirt. Sirius looked at her with interest and curiosity. Harry ripped his shirt open and bent down to lick his chest and abs. He groaned as bit near his hipbone and pulled her in for a rough, desperate kiss.

Sirius cupped her and paused when he felt her going commando. She winked and Sirius's hand spasmed where he was lightly tracing her thighs. He urgently got down on his knees and placed one of her leg over his shoulder.

Sirius grabbed her thigh as his fingers entered her folds in quick second. Harry's back arched as he licked her slit. Sirius alternated between sucking and licking her clit as he set a brutal pace fingering her. Harry lost all hold on her sanity as she held onto his shoulder for her life. Harry mewled and moaned loudly enough that her brother would be able to hear her. Before she realized it, her world exploded and she sagged against the door.

Sirius looked up at her smugly and in pride. She wanted to be mad at the smugness but the sight of Sirius, covered in her juices, looking at her as if she is his favorite buffet made her wetter. Sirius started to pull her dress up as he slowly stood up. Sirius licked the new available skin as he slowly got up. He paid special attention to her hipbone.

Harry's hand grabbed Sirius hair as he took her breast in his mouth. Harry pressed against Sirius's pulsing heat. Sirius left her breasts and slanted his lips over hers. Sirius threw her dress and bra (*when did he unhook that?*) somewhere and carried Harry to his dorm bed, bridal style. Sirius grinned as he joined her in the bed.

What a time to be alive, Harry thought before she was swept in the whirlwind called Sirius Black.

Lily watched as James grumbled and paced the floor watching the staircase his best friend and his sister had disappeared to... over an hour ago.

"What's taking him so long?", James grumbled as he chugged a another drink

"If you have to ask, you haven't been doing it right Prongs.", Remus replied dryly

"Hey!", James defended indignantly.

"I would be surprised if we saw them at all, today.", Marlena said as she sipped her drink with gleeful smile

"I would drag them down to party, if I have to!", James declared angrily.

"*Oooo*...I dont think I would survive the horror of seeing my sister do the nasty nasty.", Lily chimed with revulsion

James turned slightly green and he looked at Lily and then upstairs in dilemma.

"They would *come*, when they are ready, Prongs.", Remus said with a grin

"What is that supposed to mean? They can't be doing *that* for that long!", James paced

"Well, his stamina is legendary.", Remus said slyly as he slurped his drink watching James turn an interesting shade of green.

"I mean you are aware of what he likes in bed and his creativity.", Remus added with Cheshire cat smile.

James sat down on his hunches as he grabbed his hair and whispered *ew* repeatedly.

"You love to terrorize him.", Lily said with chuckle

"Small pleasures of life ", Remus said with evil glint

"I thought this was party?", a lazy, relaxed voice said from behind them.

They whipped around to find a glowing Harry and extremely satisfied

Sirius behind them.

"What were you two doing for so long?', James asked sharply as he got up from his hunched position

Sirius gave him a look, which made James pause.

"***Nope***, forget I asked. I need drink. Copious amount of drink.", James said hurriedly

Sirius barked a laugh as he followed James to get drunk but not before giving Harry a solid kiss. Remus winked at her blushing Harry as he followed the dark haired boys to get plastered.

"Drinks!", Marlena shoved drinks in Lily and Harry's hand and disappeared as quickly as she had appeared like some Drink Fairy.

"So...", Lily asked suggestively as Harry turned an interesting shade of red.

"Nope. Nada. Not discussing it ", Harry mumbled as she chugged her whole drink.

Lily was pleasantly buzzed as she eyes James, whose kiss had sent her whole world in frenzy. She knew would start categorizing her life before and after the kiss. She never expected him to fly in and kiss her on the stand in front of everyone. She wont deny, it was one of her fantasies. She can safely say that this is one story that she wont mind repeating over and over again for her grandkids.

"Shall I start calling you my sister in law, now?', Harry asked teasingly

Lily blushed as she stammered, " We didn't discuss it yet."

"What were you doing in the locker room for that hour then?", Harry asked with a wicked gleam.

Lily spluttered as she remembered the heavy make out session they had in the changing room till Sirius interrupted them, with a smug and evil look. Harry looked nauseated and happy at same time. Lily laughed as it was the identical look James carried when Harry and Sirius would be all lovey dovey.

Harry laughed as Lily refused to answer.

"For record, I think you would be the best Sister In law, I could have asked for.", Harry winked as Lily felt relief flood her.

Lily knew how much James valued Harry and she has been a little wary of how her friend would react to this situation. Harry patted her shoulder in encouragement but then went rigid as she eyed the door.

Lily didn't know what it was but it pulled her out of her happy high too. Dumbledore had warned them Voldemort would attack soon and they all need to be ready for it. It's been couple of weeks since the dire warning and no one had heard a peep from the Death Eaters, so life had resumed as normal. They had classes, learned art of dueling, prepared Hogwarts for attack and, of course, had the final Quidditch match.

Harry moved slowly towards the door. Harry moved her wand in an interesting way and people started to move away from door. In fact, people too drunk started to disperse and retire for the night. The door blasted open and Lily was blinded by light. Harry's shield had prevented anyone from getting hurt.

"Everyone, GET DOWN!!", Harry yelled.

Everyone got down except James and Sirius, who were suspended half way as they if stuck between wanting to be on the ground and standing.

"Sirius, James. GET DOWN!", Lily screamed at them.

They both looked at her befuddled.

"Aren't we already down?", Sirius asked confused

"I thought we were.", James added seriously

Marlena grabbed them both and pulled them down.

"Awww!! That hurt!", James complained.

"Yeah, gravity is evil.", Sirius concurred.

Alice shushed them.

Harry in meantime had accio-ed a sofa and pushed it vertically through the gate. It seemed to have taken out few of the attackers if the noise of people falling on the stairs was anything to go by. Harry stormed through the gate and counter attacked the attackers.

Lily and Alice moved out to help while Marlena kept everyone else inside the dorm safe. Harry was fighting three attackers at same time.

Another was going to attack from behind.

"Oh no, you don't.", Lily warned as she started fight. This attacker , who was wearing a mask, attack style seemed familiar. Almost as if she had rehearsed with it. Lily saw the a dark, fiery and blazing once familiar black eyes staring back at her.

"Really, Snape? This is how low you stoop too.", Lily spit out as she knocked Snape out.

Lily thinks she saw regret flash in his eyes before she knocked him out using the statue. She tied him up and took his wand. She looked back to see Alice and Harry had subdued four attackers.

James, Remus, Sirius and Marlena came charging out. All looked sober.

"Marlena and Alice, would you be kind enough to check on the attackers below and tie them up. We would need them to be properly checked for any injuries.", Harry requested them softly as she eyed Yaxley.

A white light shot through Harry's wand and a Patronus Stag galloped out of the corridor.

"Everyone, please stay inside. We might still get more attacks.", Harry said calmly to students milling at the door.

No one moved. Harry signed as she pulled a clear liquid from her pocket and forced Yaxley to swallow it. Dumbledore and Professors all came just moments later. Dumbledore halted everyone. He took in the scene and nodded at Harry

"Did Voldemort send you to attack us?", Harry asked Yaxley

"No."

"Why did you attack us?", Harry continued

"We wanted to do something and were tired of waiting.", Yaxley said emotionlessly

"What is he planning?", Harry asked softly

"Junior Death Eaters are not privy to Master's plans. " , Yaxley replied

"Are you a Death Eater?", Harry asked

"Yes."

"Since when?", Harry asked

"Last summer."

"What was your role till now?", Harry asked

"To gather more supporters and Death Eaters."

"Did you plan to murder any of us today?"

"No."

"What was the plan for today then?"

"To Terrorize."

Everyone absorbed it silently. Harry and Dumbledore had some silent communication.

"The door was unlocked using the password. They could have heard it lying in wait.", Harry theorized.

"They shouldn't have been able to open the gate, unless someone gave them the password willingly and with no threat or accidental hearing.", Professor McGonagall said agitated.

"We had made the defense spells such that anyone who got password forcefully or accidently will forget the password when needed.", Dumbledore explained calmly as he eyed Harry.

"Did one of the Gryffindor give you the password to the Gryffindor tower?", Harry asked Yaxley patiently

"Yes.", Yaxley replied

Outrage and anger followed his response. Harry was oddly calm and patient. Lily is sure it must be the play of light because she swears, she saw Harry eyes lit up in satisfaction and happiness before her nonchalant mask descended back on her.

"Is the Gryffindor a Death Eater?", Harry asked patiently

"Yes."

"Has the Gryffindor taken the Death Eater Mark?", Harry asked in

dead silence

"Yes."

"Is the Gryffindor involved in any other plans till now?", Harry asked curiously

"Yes, Gryffindor was to give us details on whereabouts of Harry Potter."

"Was the Gryffindor forced into joining the Death Eaters rank?", Harry asked darkly

"No. Gryffindor had reached out and was eager to serve the Lord."

"Who is this Gryffindor?", Harry asked just before storm hit and destroyed everyone and everything.

"Peter Pettigrew.", Yaxley replied in deafening silence and growing horror.

Chapter End Notes

I am so sorry about the delay.
I genuinely appreciate everyone's patience and calm. A lot is going in my life and its making it slightly difficult to update the story.
Hope you all enjoyed it.

Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Why am I here?", Peter asked meekly

Lily controlled her disgust and hatred for this boy in front of her and gave a tight lipped smile,

"We are..."

Dumbledore interrupted her suddenly and said in his usual calm manner," Miss Evans, good good. You are here. Are you here making sure the defense plans are secured properly?"

Lily smiled Dumbledore, "No professor, I have to meet Remus at the tower to help with students. Peter, here, should be able to manage till James comes back."

"Excellent! Excellent! Mr. Pettigrew, make sure this plan is safely placed into that vault. We wouldn't want it to fall in the wrong hands. After all, this is our secret attack plan to defeat the Dark forces.", Dumbledore said with a grim smile

Peter nodded eagerly as his eyes sparkled with greed. Lily swallowed her instinct to clock him.

"Miss Evans, let's hurry. We don't have a lot of time.", Dumbledore smartly took her away from the offending party.

Lily nodded at Dumbledore and went to the Main Hall, where everyone was gathered.

"Let's begin, then.", Professor McGonngal said stiffly.

Lily thought back to how they all got here and how that one boy was responsible for making Sirius, James and Remus look so broken, determined and hurt at the same time.

All she could think about was how one announcement of *"Peter Pettigrew!"* crumbled her belief system and lead to the revelations that both shook her and impressed her.

She still can see how that one answer had stunned the whole audience. Sirius, James and Remus had betrayal, anger, hurt and confusion marring their handsome faces.

Harry didn't react at all to the news. She titled her head to the side as she looked at Yaxley, still under the truth potion's effect.

"What useful information did Peter provide?", Harry asked with pursed lips

"Harry Potter's whereabouts in *Diagon Alley*, where a group of Death eaters were sent to recapture her."

James's eyes were blazing in anger as they all remembered Peter "searching" for Harry and not finding her.

Oh, how that traitor had manipulated them all with his naivety and innocence!

Lily felt disgust roll off her. Each and every memory she had with Peter were tainted with his betrayal. She wondered how the boys were going to deal with this earth shattering news.

"What happened with the information?", Harry asked softly

"Harry Potter slipped us. Next time we were able to locate her, she was with her friends. We were under strict instructions to not cause a scene, so we left."

"Anything else?", Harry pushed

"We are waiting for his input on defense plans put in place before attack.", Yaxley said emotionlessly

Harry looked at Dumbledore, who nodded and raised his wand. All the attackers fell asleep.

"We all need to locate Mr. Pettigrew as soon as possible. If he comes to the tower, act normal. We need to apprehend him, not kill him.", Dumbledore said seriously to a tower full of children, who were betrayed and hurt.

James grabbed Harry's wrist and walked towards their dorm. Sirius nodded to Lily to join as well. All of them trekked up. With each step, their anger increased and betrayal deepened.

"THAT FUCKING BASTARD!", James yelled in disgust as soon as they

entered

"THAT RAT! THAT COWARD!", Sirius yelled at the same.

Remus looked out at the window in grave silence as a nerve throbbed dangerously on his forehead. Harry sighed, exhausted, and laid on Sirius's bed staring at the ceiling.

James continued to curse Peter as Sirius destroyed Peter's belongings. Remus continued to stand at the window in silence.

"How are you so calm?", James fired at oddly still Remus

"I am ***angry***.", Remus said in a very controlled fury. "But unlike you, I dont have the luxury of showing it without being called a monster. Without someone taking it as a sign of proof that I need to be put down like a rabid dog, that I am just like what the stories tell you."

"But everyone gets angry... that's only human.", Lily said as pain at Remus's suffering went through her heart.

" Up until the point you are not.", Remus said in defeat

"What if he reveals our secrets?", Sirius whispered in renewed agitation

James grabbed his hair in frustration and helplessness as he looked at all of them. She has never seen James look so despondent and hopeless. She went and held his hand in support. He gave her a wary smile as he stared at Harry in worry.

"Harry, he didn't ever do anything to you, right?", James asked in trepidation

"He was never successful, for sure.", Harry said mysteriously

"You *knew*?", Remus asked Harry

"Since *when*?", Sirius asked in agitation

"Why didn't you say something?", James asked in worry

"I was hoping it was a phase. That it was something of a long con where he would come to our side in the end.", Harry said woefully

"What if, it is?", Remus asked hopefully

"No. He chose his side long ago.", James said as if piecing the clues together

"He has always been apprehensive of chances of light side winning.", Sirius said slowly

"He is always the first to escape when things get hard.", James added as he rubbed his chest

"He is a *rat*, ", Sirius said the last word as a curse, "I just never thought he would be traitor and a coward!", Sirius said as a tear slipped from his eyes

All three boys teared up as realization hit them that their best friend and brother was a traitor, who had sold everything they held sacred to the devil.

"What do you mean by "he was never successful "?," Sirius enquired with an edge

Harry just shrugged and continued to look at the ceiling, deep in thoughts.

"Why didn't you *say* something sooner, Harry?", James asked as he sniffled

Harry sat up, squared her shoulder and took a deep breath.

"I had no proof, James, just a hunch. I was not going to destroy one of the important relationship in your life based on a *hunch*. ", Harry said tiredly

"When..how....when?", Sirius struggled to speak

"I saw Yaxley and Peter being chummy one of the morning, I think it was after a full moon. I didn't know for sure... till today.", Harry said softly

"You could have still said something...anything", James asked heartbroken as if hurt that Harry didn't trust him with this.

"I thought he was testing waters to see if he can be a Death Eater, not that he has already taken the bloody mark and sealed his future. I mean, he was still sort of loyal to you guys. I did see phases where he was jealous, bitter and sneaky. But people get swayed in a war such as this. You never know what side they are on till it ends.", Harry shook

her head as she went to the window.

"I never thought Voldemort would actually agree to take him on at such a young age. Plus, I wanted to make sure that if my suspicions were correct, it wont blow in our faces.", Harry said as she stared at the night sky

"What would blow in our face? He is the one who would go to Azkaban for being the traitor he is.", Sirius asked in confusion

Harry just looked at Remus. All three boys jerked straight and blood drained from their face as horror and betrayal itched their face.

"What if he has already revealed it?", James whispered in renewed worry

"He hasn't, otherwise Bella would have said something by now.", Sirius said with pursed lips

"I *will* kill him before he can utter a word.", Remus said with determination

"I will gladly help you.", James said murderously as Sirius nodded in agreement.

Harry snorted and shook her head, "No need to become a murderer for that coward. I have sorted *that* situation out."

All of them looked at her baffled. Harry took two strollers from somewhere in her pocket and handed them to James and Sirius.

Lily saw Ministry of Africa stamp on them.

"You are registered in land of Africa", Harry said with a beaming smile

"What?", James said baffled.

"How?", Sirius asked he read through the scroll.

Remus read Sirius 's letter and his jaw fell open.

"You are an *Animagus*!?!", Lily screeched as she read the scroll James was holding.

"Yeah, we completed the process last year to help Remus during his flurry little problem.", James responded absentmindedly as he continued to read the scroll.

Lily paused as she looked at the three boys. She knew they helped Remus but she always thought that they were sneaking in early to help Remu, *post* his transformation. Not *during* .The love she felt for the boys grew exponentially at the thoughtfulness and care they had for each other. The length they were willing to go to protect each other was a rarity. Even families don't go that beyond sometimes.

How could Peter decide to diss this level of care, love and brotherhood like that?

"Did it help?", Lily asked Remus curiously

"Yes, it made the transformation significantly less painful. I was even able to control my mind during the transformation as time went on.", Remus said gratefully

Lily beamed at the boys and squeezed James arm in pride. James smiled at her softly but turned his attention to Harry, who was watching the interaction peacefully.

"Why?", James asked with slight edge

"Keeping it a secret here is in best interest as it can give you both a great anonymity in case of any danger but it was always a threat too. It could have been exposed any number of ways and then you both have to suffer for no reason. "

"Who..?", Remus asked in awe at the forward thinking

"I asked my father's old friend in Africa to help with this. No one will know your real identity unless you have given written and verbal confirmation that you want this information out but you are not illegal anymore. So even if comes out, you both won't be in danger.", Harry explained nonchalantly

"And *Peter*?", James spit his name

"Ah, if he reveals the secret he would be in Azkaban. So he is going to spend his life in Azkaban, one way or another.", Harry said satisfied

"When did you..?", Sirius asked dumbfounded.

"A week after I came to stay with James. Uncle Monty gave it to me when we met him in France.", Harry said with a shrug

"That's why he kept making animal jokes.", James said in realization

Harry snorted and nodded.

"You barely knew us then, Harry.", Sirius whispered as he side hugged her in thanks

"It *you guys*, Sirius. Time hardly matters.", Harry said with emotion

The boys squeezed her into a hug. They all fell into deep thought.

"Well, then.", Lily said decisively

They all looked at her, intrigued.

"Show me your animagus form!", Lily said excitedly

Harry chuckled. James preened and Sirius rolled his eyes.

"It's truly remarkable, Lily.", James said enthusiastically

"Yeah, your eyes might pop out.", Remus said with a snort

"Or his balls could fall off, it's a toss really.", Sirius added dryly.

James flicked Sirius's forehead and said, "it happened *once*!"

"*Excuse me*?", Lily asked in shock

Harry muffled her laugh.

"Yeah, he has a detachable ball system.", Remus said in mirth

"Its not detachable ball system, it's detachable *horn* system.", James said in defense

"A *what*?", Lily asked

Lily chuckled lightly as she remembers a reddened James transform into a majestic Stag. She got so lost in admiring James that she forgot to ask Sirius to transform.

Soon then.

"Students! Given the circumstances, we are cancelling this year's papers!", Dumbledore voice brought back to present war and Great Hall assembly.

Lily snorted as James and Sirius got up on the table to cheer while the whole hall burst into excited chatter.

"We will be sending everyone back to their homes tomorrow, kindly pack your belongings..."

Lily lost her train of thought as a sonorous voice rang in her ears

"*Hogwarts, surrender to your master*!"

Everyone screamed as the voice ripped through everyone's ear drum.

Dumbledore waved his wand and the noise vanished but they could see an army of black colored army marching towards the Hall. As one, Professors and student councils started to implement their defense plans for the war that was clearly at their door.

It was time to end this madness.

Chapter End Notes

Not my best chapter. But hopefully you guys like it.

Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Halt!", Harry said in a commanding voice

All Death Eaters stopped in union and turned towards each other in confusion.

"Don't you guys have like have work, family or business to attend to? Is this a place for an evening stroll?", Harry huffed.

"This is not a *stroll*...", Voldemort said, enunciating each word as if speaking to mentally challenged person

"This is an *attack*!", Bellatrix annoyed voice came from the assembled strollers

"On what? The all mighty Grass?", Harry asked confused

"No, ***you***!", Bellatrix roared as she flicked her wand to fire a spell, only for her wand turned into a duck

Harry snorted.

"That attire cannot be comfortable ", Lily tutted suddenly

Death Eaters shuffled and became a bit restless

"Aren't you guys sweating hot in all that ridiculous costume though? ", Harry asked sympathetically

"Looks uncomfortable.", Alice agreed compassionately.

There was a mummer of agreement that started in the Death Eaters ranks.

"Enough! This dress causes fear to strike in your hearts!,' Voldemort defended his robes passionately as he ruffled his robe and stompped his foot on ground.

"Aww, I am sure you spent hours planning and designing this. But really, this is just so last season.", Andy said haughty.

"Can you guys even move your arms freely? ", Sirius asked curiously as he tugged on an unsuspecting death eater, scaring the life out of the death eater

"No clear visual range for sure.,", James noted as he popped beside another clueless Death Eaters, making the Death Eaters shriek.

"Stop it!", Bellatrix demanded as she shoo-ed Sirius away from Death Eaters.

"Stop being so touchy, Bella", Sirius whined

"Can you act matured for *once* in your life!", Bellatrix said exasperated

"I am allowed to be childish! I am still in school!", Sirius said dramatically as he pulled Bellatrix's cloak

"Merlin! Why are you so embarrassing?", Bellatrix bellowed in annoyance as she pulled her clock away from Sirius's grabby hands.

"Learnt from best.", Sirius said as he smacked a kiss on Bellatrix's cheek and sauntered away.

Bellatrix went back to her position, muttering about idiotic family members.

"Do you guys like have a specified place to stand in this formation?", Longbottom asked curiously

"Yes.", came response in union

"What if someone has bad stomach and has to skip for a day? Do you guys stand with a gap in your formation", Lupin asked in wonder

"No one skips!", Voldemort thundered

"Eww...Gross! So what that person just stinks the whole time?", Mary said disgusted

"*No*!!", Voldemort said equally disgusted.

"Wait, who decides where to stand?", Frank asked

"Of course, My Lord does!", Bellatrix said peeved

"So does that the farther apart you are from him, less favored you are?", Remus asked

"And does the position shift ever?", James asked

Death Eaters shuffled and murmured.

Voldemort slashed his wand and said," ENOUGH!!"

The crowd across both sides went silent.

"You guys realize we are *attacking* you?", Voldemort bellowed

"Ugh...so lame! This is depressing. Maybe you guys should have made a grander entry.", Reg said judgingly.

Voldemort raised his wand. Lighting started to shoot from his wand.

The teenage mob yawned.

"Come on, we did better than this in a school prank!", James said bored.

"For a powerful wizard, this is an absolute sad display of power ", Sirius said unimpressed

Voldemort muttered something suspiciously like 'i hate teenagers!'

"ATTACK!", Voldemort bellowed

As one the Death Eaters raised their wands on nonchalant and bored teenagers.

Some of Death eaters wands turned into live mouse that ran away from them. Death Eaters scrambled to get their wands, making the teenagers snicker.

Voldemort glared at his flabbergasted Death eaters before converting wands back into their original wand.

"Well.. what are you waiting for? ATTACK!!!", Voldemort bellowed at his Death Eaters, who were definitely not falling over each other to get their wands.

Everyone looked at each other and then, as if propelled by an invisible force, war started that would be define the future.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the delayed update.

Hope it makes sense. :)

Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

an attempt at something ....hope you all like it. <3

"Lily, are you *okay*?", Harry asked in concern as she warded off a spell coming Lily's way

Lily stood in middle of the war zone. Her mouth was open and eyes huge as the war went on around her. Harry wondered if she had suffered extreme torture or seen inhumane behavior.

"I was *okay*.", Lily said in an almost affront tone.

"*What*?", asked Harry in concern as she came closer to Lily to see what was going on.

Lily simply pointed in front of her like 'can you believe this shit?' expression.

A Stag was stampeding terrified Death Eaters, causing chaos in the middle of battle field. Harry could swear, the stag was carrying a 'Fight this, Motherfuckers' expression.

"I am in love with a *toddler*!", Lily said in exasperation, making Harry bark a laugh out.

"Well, it should even out your grumpy grandma personality.", Alice yelled from somewhere near them as she knocked out a survivor of Prongs' attack.

"Hey! Its called maturity!", Lily defended herself as she stomped her feet while stunning an incoming Death Eater.

"Easy, Grandma!", Marlena said teasingly as she transformed a Death Eater into a bone and threw it to the Giant Squid

Harry snorted as she threw another Death Eater to an excited Giant Squid, who was happily playing fetch as several Death Eaters flying his way. Harry decided that to preserve her remaining sanity, she would live in ignorance as to the fate of the poor Death Eaters caught by the Giant Squid.

"Is that *Remus*?", Mary yelled from above, flying on her broom.

They all collectively turned to see Remus engaged in battle in a very unique way.

Remus would point his wand in random direction of Death Eaters and blast of snow would come out of his wand, freezing the Death Eaters to the core.

"Begone!! I banish you from this castle, you bastards!", Remus would yell dramatically. Every. Single. Time.

The ground would open and swallow the frozen Death Eaters and then close up. Then he would turn around and start the process again.

Remus managed to catch a Death Eater, who had managed to sneak on him from behind. Clutching his invisible pearls, Remus slapped the mask off the offending party. The eyes of the Death Eaters rattled as he swayed on spot from the impact of the slap.

"How dare you!! Have you no respect! Find some other place to take a stroll, you Dark Lord Fanatic!", Remus yelled dramatically as he turned the death eater into light bulb and hung it on a tree.

"Aww, this is pretty! I think we should organize a picnic once this is over.", Remus said dreamily. He twirled and froze another set of death eaters

Harry's eyes twitched as she bit her lips to stop laughing.

Sirius, meanwhile, was singing some song in his most carefree voice and dancing on the field. With each step, he would pause dramatically and cast spells on any Death eater in sight.

Remus and Sirius nodded at each other and then started to smack Death Eaters left, right and center. They provided a nice light show in the middle of night.

After an award worthy performance, they both smacked rear end of Prongs in happiness. Harry started to tear up at the ridiculousness of these three. Only these three would be as ridiculous and brilliant while fighting in The War.

"A horde of gits are barging in from the left. Would need folks to subdue them,", Slytherin 6th year student warned from above.

The Quidditch teams and few other flying enthusiasts across houses were throwing spells, at the same time rescuing people and giving

aerial battle strategy and warning to people fighting down. Dumbledore and Professors were stopping the onslaught of Death Eaters from entering and overwhelming the students.

Students carried injured through heavy fire to the medics, while other defended them from any attacks. There were no questions asked of which house any of them belonged to or what the blood status was. The rule seemed simple: you see injured, you help injured.

A group of Herbology geniuses, lead by Alice, were taking Death Eaters out using deadly plants. Mary and Beaters were clubbing Death Eaters from air as it was air hockey.

Harry chuckled as she saw third years attack a Death Eater with dung bombs and then forth years knocking the stinky death eater out.

Harry wondered if killing Voldemort is the only way to stop the war and the madness that has spread in the wizarding world. Was there some other way to stop his terror forever while ensuring everyone's safety?

Harry knocked out a death eater and in its place stood Voldemort.

"Jesus! That's a creepy arse smile.", Harry said before she could stop herself.

"It's the laughing spell your *stupid* boyfriend used.", Voldemort cursed with a nightmare inducing smile.

Harry snorted, "And you couldn't remove it?"

"***No***! ", Voldemort grumbled while still smiling as if he smelled dung under his nose.

Lockhart's smiling face suddenly popped in Harry's head seeing Voldemort.

Voldemort shot a spell at her, which she managed to duck.

Harry grinned wickedly. Thanking Lockhart, she fired a spell.

Voldemort's bones in his wand arm vanished.

Ah, to be reminded of olden days!

Harry snickered at the horrified expression on Voldemort's face as Voldemort stared at the wand rolling, slowly, towards Harry. Harry

picked the wand up.

"Give it to me!", Voldemort commanded

"Nah!", Harry grinned

"Yes." Voldemort grumbled with a thousand watt smile

"Nope!", Harry said cheerfully while twirling Voldemort's wand

"YES!", Voldemort stomped as he tried to make a grab for his wand.

"No, this is too much fun.", Harry said as she easily side stepped Voldemort's pathetic attempt to grab the wand.

"Its good, you were never into Quidditch! Your reflexes suck!", Harry taunted Voldemort as she sauntered towards other side.

Harry threw the wand high up in the air and cast a spell to break that wretched wand.

Voldemort scream of anguish, threw everyone near him off their feet and drew the everyone's attention to this fight.

"You stupid girl! I will **murder** you.."

"With what?", Harry asked curiously

"I don't need a wand to kill you!", Voldemort said threatening as his smile finally dropped

Voldemort unconsciously soothed his cheek muscles, as he rolled his shoulder.

People started to gather around. Bellatrix stood gagged and tied between the Black Brothers. Reg shushed gagging Bellatrix while Sirius used her for support to lean on as he watched the show.

Remus, James, Sirius ate popcorn as the end neared. Lily, after initial resistance, joined them.

Harry lazily casted another spell removing his other arm's bones as well.

"So the Greatest Wizard of all time, let the whole school and Professors, see you regrow your bones.", Harry said cheerfully

"Wohoo! A masterclass in art of rebuilding!", Sirius said sarcastically as he blew his flying kisses

"Behold, the Wizarding Wonder, who couldn't remove ungraduated students' smiling spell.", James mocked as he pulled Voldemort's cheeks

"You will pay for this, Potter!!", Voldemort's bit out

"For....", Sirius asked as he poked Voldemort's stomach

"This!", Voldemort said ambiguously

"If you are talking about your fashion sense, then even Black vault won't be sufficient.", Reg commented dryly as he judged the hell off Voldemort's dressing style.

"We can give you contacts to help you tad bit though. ", Sirius added helpfully as he flattened out Voldemort's hair.

"I was talking about bones! Fashion is not important!", Voldemort grounded out

"Really?.", Remus said with mysterious smile.

Voldemort's black robe has been turned into flowery, deep V neck dress with a top hat.

Voldemort closed his eyes as if to disappear from this world.

"Now, now. You know the rules, there is no apparition within Hogwarts walls, Tom. ", Harry said mirthfully as she moved closer to Voldemort.

"Voldemort!", Voldemort corrected in hatred

"Who?", Harry asked confused

"Me!", Voldemort gritted out

"Is what?", Harry asked still confused

"VOLDEMORT!", Voldemort screamed

"Where?", Harry asked surprised as looked behind her

"I AM LORD VOLDEMORT!", Voldemort frustrated

"That's a bit mouthful.", Reg said with mouthful of popcorn

"Is your first name Lord then?", Remus asked curiously

"Aww, did your girlfriend call you Lordy?", James teased

"*Ew*..Bella. Only you could find a *boyfriend* more creepy than your idiotic husband.", Sirius said as he gagged

"I have NO girlfriend.", Voldemort set the record straight.

"Ouch!", Reg patted Bella sympathetically

"That had to hurt. To be dumped by a ugly faced, half blood like this Bella.", Sirius said stoically

"You may have removed my bones and broken my wand, but I AM LORD VOLDEMORT!! I WILL DEFEAT YOU WITHOUT WAND AND BONES TODAY!", Voldemort threatened as he started to glow in power.

Harry hummed and removed his left leg bones. Voldemort screamed toppled sideways and crash landed on the ground. James sewed his lips stating Voldemort's voice was giving James wrinkles.

Who said there was only one way to end a story?

Chapter 27

Humming echoed through the dingy walls. Wailing decreased slightly as they took in the new cheerful sound coming their way. Dementors, irritated, floated to other floor to torment the poor souls left to rot in Azkaban.

Harry, dressed in bright yellow dress with a beautiful white summer hat, sauntered towards her desired destination. Sirius's Emerald necklace and Potter's diamond bracelet adorned on her brought much needed sparkle in the cagey corridors. The halls echoed of sadness, regret and fear.

Harry was in a *good* mood.

Finally! After all these years and in *both* her lives, there was peace in her world.

The people she loved were alive, thriving and had positive future to look forward too. Bad people were removed from power and society. No false imprisonment and punishment were handed out. The Magical Society was reeling in positive energy and looking forward to build a better tomorrow. Hell, even the Werewolf Care Act was passed, making life of all werewolves much easier.

New norms were introduced to better assimilate muggle born students into the Magical world. Each convicted Death Eater's assets were seized by Ministry. The businesses and assets were either sold off to highest bidder or used by Ministry for social betterment purpose. The money from them was used to aid families hurt by Voldemort and his crusade along with setting up funds for Muggleborns and werewolves to get a proper education and life. The last one really hurt the Death Eaters community feelings.

James and Sirius had suggested that large lands with old protection of Old Magical Death Eaters' families should be used for housing endangered species and to provide safe haven for Werewolves to convert once a month. Some mansion were renovated and repurposed for housing kids who had no family or didnt want to return back to their home. Lestrange Family manor was repurposed to hold summer classes for Muggle born kids taught by volunteers. With their power, money and assets seized, the Magical world saw a drastic shift in how society structure and norms.

Lestranges, Dolohov and others were given life sentences in maximum security prison and striped of all their wealth and removed from all position of power. Bellatrix, with help from Mr Black, was given a life sentence but not in maximum security.

Peter was given lifetime imprisonment in Azkaban for using unforgivable curses and being a unregistered Animagus. It came as nasty surprise to Peter when he realized that his bargaining chip of having information of two other unregistered Animagus was useless.

James, Sirius and Remus were heartbroken and pissed that their best friend had turned traitor and they were none the wiser, despite several signs. There would be days and nights when they would just stare blankly in space in despair. The first full moon night after the war, the three boys and their animal form broke down in uncontrollable sobs. They were getting better but it would take some time for their hurt to hurt less. It would always be a painful reminder but they would move ahead.

Hogwarts was starting in a week. This would be the first time in Harry's lives when Voldemort won't be waiting on the sides to ruin her and everyone else's lives.

Blacks and Potters came back from a family vacation in Germany. There was a fast friendship developing between Lord Black and Lord Potter. Lord Black and Lord Potter were planning on spearheading the changing Wizarding world direction, with help from their Hiers. Lady Black was mysteriously taking a break in Black's winter house.

"You would find who you seek in middle cell. Howler, if you need help. ", Frank told Harry merrily, as he walked back into the Auror room.

Harry chuckled as she remembered the Howler that Neville had recieved in her last life.

What if she did send a Howler to Frank for help. Could be hilarious. Hmm...

Harry whistled as she walked past few death eaters, cheerfully waving at their angry faces. Harry stopped at the cell she was seeking. The interiors would make Shack look likea 5 star resort. There was no window and the dust was at least few decades old. There was a iron bed with tattered mattress and torn bedsheet. Scratch marks and blood decorated the walls of the cell as did stink of human waste.

The person that put the room to shame, was staring gloomily at a peeling wall.

Voldemort high-pitched shrieked echoed in the halls, as he registered Harry.

Harry held Voldemort's eyes, which filled with usual hate and anger, and grinned.

Kill with kindness and all that crap.

Harry did look damn fine today in her summer dress and blown hair. The startled response on seeing her, was warranted if you ask her.

Sirius's response was much more desirable. Her toes still curled as she remembered Sirius's enthusiasm, when she had come out all dressed. They were few hours late, but oh well, it *is* post war peace era.

"This Is RIDICULOUS!! You CANNOT KEEP ME HOSTAGE!", Voldemort roared breaking her pleasure filled day dreaming.

"Aww...but it's fun. Isn't it?", Harry cooed as critically eyed everything around her

"Yeah, join me then.", Voldemort said bitterly

"I have always been an outdoorsy person.", Harry said cheekily as she twirled.

Voldemort bared his teeth. If a muggle dentist saw Voldemort's teeth condition, they would just build him a new set of teeth.

"How's is it going, Tim? Comfortable?", Harry asked cheerfully.

"Tom!", Voldemort said reflexively. His eyes popped wide open and mouth dropped open at his own defensive response.

"Well, *Tom,* at least your dual personality disorder is getting cured here.", Harry said with a smirk

"***You!"***, Voldemort fumed as he struggled to get up.

"You look delightful. I think you have finally found a place that enhances your personality.", Harry said sarcastically

"Let me out and then you would see.", Voldemort gritted

"Been there, done that. I am bored now. I mean there has to be other things to do in life beside fighting you and your ridiculous crusade.", Harry said dismissively

"I will rise back to power. You will never have a life not threatened by me!", Voldemort said ominously

"You *really* need a hobby and maybe a shrink.", Harry said sweetly

"I have travelled beyond realms of magic and you cannot defeat me, you silly girl", Voldemort continued in darker voice

"Oh! You mean your horcruxes? Yeah, they are all gone.", Harry said with a shrug

"*What*?", Voldemort spluttered

"Have to say the items you chose as Horcruxes were a little princess-ly for my taste.", Harry tutted.

"You don't know", Voldemort said as he backed into a wall as it dawned on him that his safety net was flamed to ashes.

Harry smirked.

"What do you mean Princess -ly? They were historical items of wizarding world!", Voldemort defended passionately as if just registering Harry's last comment

"Tiara, locket, ring, a pet, diary and a cup. Come on! Even you got to admit, they were very princess-ly.", Harry teased

"They are not!"

"So are"

"Nu-huh!"

"Ah-hah", Harry said smugly

"I will get you....you pathetic creature!", Voldemort spat out

"How are dementors treating ya? With such less soul left in you, is it even affecting you?", Harry asked curiously

Voldemort just glared and his nose flared.

"Did you do something to your nose?"

A voice popped from Harry's side, startling both Voldemort and her. James and Sirius had popped up on her sides from nowhere.

"How's Bellatrix?", Harry asked after her heart rate came down to somewhat normal.

Sirius's grey eyes, filled with mischief and love, held her captive as he slowly and lightly moved his hand on her arms, leaving goosebumps in its wake.

"She still has her spirits. But her personality is definitely getting worse. Never thought it was possible. Reg is with her. Giving updates on Slytherins... because you know the world revolves around Slytherins and their politics.", Sirius said while rolling his eyes.

Sirius pulled Harry close and kissed her on her cheeks. Voldemort gagged.

"Why is your nose crooked and so small?", James asked curiously to Voldemort as he peered inside the cell, ignoring the love birds beside him.

Voldemort made affronted sound as he tapped his nose.

"Nothing is wrong with my nose!", Voldemort defended his nose to noisy teenagers

"Do you like your nose?", Sirius asked curiously

"Yeah!", Voldemort duh-ed

"Oh good! Because no body noses you like you nose you!", James said stoically

"And the ones that noses, noses!" Sirius added with a nod

Voldemort gave them a bombastic side eye and turned away from them. His hands flapping away. Voldemort legs were allowed to be grow back to normal but hands were not, as part of his punishment.

Voldemort suddenly started to waddle back into the wall. His legs buckled a bit under invisible threat.

"The *Poenitentiam* spell?", Harry asked Voldemort, who was screaming his lungs out.

"Well, this was better than the muggle horror movie we watched last night.", James said critically

"Let's go. Because I think Voldemort is going to need new robe, for sure.", Sirius said as wrinkled his nose.

Harry chuckled and decided to leave Voldemort to his misery.

Voldemort was given a life sentence in Azkaban along with no arms and *Poenitentiam* spell. A spell that makes the attacker relive all the emotions and feelings of the person they bullied, tortured or killed till the person repents. Given most of Voldemort's victims are dead, his spell would never be lifted. To make sure he suffers enough, the spell will be cast on him every year.

They howlered their goodbyes to Frank, who was now a full fledged Auror, and apparated back to the Muggle eatery, where everyone was meeting. It had become impossible for Harry to be anywhere in Wizarding world without causing a frenzy. She was hoping that in months to come, the frenzy would die down.

James was bouncing around trying to experience everything he could around him. Sirius was checking out a biker's jacket. Remus was judging them both as Lily cracked up to something Marlena had commented.

Harry wondered if this is how life would be. Just them and their shenanigans.

It wasn't a bad life to live.

Sirius pulled her for a toe curling kiss. Harry blushed at the Lily's teasing smirk. Lily, turned beetroot red, at the ass smack that James gave her. James dragged Lily to try all the wonderful muggle sweets.

Sirius, meanwhile, pulled Harry into a booth. His hands 'rested' on her leg and kept sliding up.

It sure wasn't a bad life to live. She can't wait for her peaceful life to begin.

End Notes

*to original creators
Updates will be erratic! Please bear with me! Your comments always push to publish sooner.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!